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INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN
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THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

BY THE LATE

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PREFACE.

IN response to frequent applications from many quarters the Trustees of the Lightfoot Fund have decided to issue in a separate form the Essay on the Christian Ministry as it was left by Bishop Lightfoot.

The Essay originally appeared in the Commentary on the Epistle to the Philippians and afterwards in the volume of Dissertations on the Apostolic Age.

The Trustees have appended to it (A) extracts explanatory of the Essay selected for this purpose by the Bishop himself, (B) an extract bearing on the subject from his Preface to the Didache, (C) a passage also by the Bishop explaining his change of opinion respecting the Ignatian question.

18235

The readers of the foregoing lines will have a chastened interest in learning that they are among the last which passed under Bishop Westcott's eye; and that among his latest judgments was one of entire approval of the appearance of this Essay in its present form.

H. W. W.

DURHAM,
July 29, 1901.

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THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

Ideal of the Christian Church.

THE kingdom of Christ, not being a kingdom of this world, is not limited by the restrictions which fetter other societies, political or religious. It is in the fullest sense free, comprehensive, universal. It displays this character, not only in the acceptance of all comers who seek admission, irrespective of race or caste or sex, but also in the instruction and treatment of those who are already its members. It has no sacred days or seasons, no special sanctuaries, because every time and every place alike are holy. Above all it has no sacerdotal system. It interposes no sacrificial tribe or class between God and man, by whose intervention alone God is reconciled and man forgiven. Each individual member holds personal communion with the Divine Head. To Him immediately he is responsible, and from Him directly he obtains pardon and draws strength.

Necessary qualification.

It is most important that we should keep this ideal definitely in view, and I have therefore stated it as broadly as possible. Yet the broad statement, if allowed to stand alone, would suggest a false impression, or at least would convey only a half truth.

It must be evident that no society of men could hold together without officers, without rules, without institutions of any kind; and the Church of Christ is not exempt from this universal law. The conception in short is strictly an *ideal*, which we must ever hold before our eyes, which should inspire and interpret ecclesiastical polity, but which nevertheless cannot supersede the necessary wants of human society, and, if crudely and hastily applied, will lead only to signal failure. As appointed days and set places are indispensable to her efficiency, so also the Church could not fulfil the purposes for which she exists, without rulers and teachers, without a ministry of reconciliation, in short, without an order of men who may in some sense be designated a priesthood. In this respect the ethics of Christianity present an analogy to the politics. Here also the ideal conception and the actual realization are incommensurate and in a manner contradictory. The Gospel is contrasted with the Law, as the spirit with the letter. Its ethical principle is not a code of positive ordinances, but conformity to a perfect exemplar, incorporation into a divine life. The distinction is most important and eminently fertile in practical results. Yet no man would dare to live without laying down more or less definite rules for his own guidance, without yielding obedience to law in some sense; and those who discard or attempt to discard all such aids are often farthest from the attainment of Christian perfection.

The idea and the realization.

This qualification is introduced here to deprecate any misunderstanding to which the opening statement, if left without compensation, would fairly be

exposed. It will be time to enquire hereafter in what sense the Christian ministry may or may not be called a priesthood. But in attempting to investigate the historical development of this divine institution, no better starting-point suggested itself than the characteristic distinction of Christianity, as declared occasionally by the direct language but more frequently by the eloquent silence of the apostolic writings.

Special characteristic of Christianity.

For in this respect Christianity stands apart from all the older religions of the world. So far at least, the Mosaic dispensation did not differ from the religions of Egypt or Asia or Greece. Yet the sacerdotal system of the Old Testament possessed one important characteristic, which separated it from heathen priesthoods and which deserves especial notice. The priestly tribe held this peculiar relation to God only as the *representatives* of the whole nation. As *delegates* of the people, they offered sacrifice and made atonement. The whole community is regarded as 'a kingdom of priests,' 'a holy nation.' When the sons of Levi are set apart, their consecration is distinctly stated to be due under the divine guidance not to any inherent sanctity or to any caste privilege, but to an act of delegation on the part of the entire people. The Levites are, so to speak, ordained by the whole congregation. 'The children of Israel,' it is said, 'shall put their hands upon the Levites[1].' The nation thus deputes to a single tribe the priestly functions which belong properly to itself as a whole.

The Jewish priesthood.

Its relation to the Christian priesthood.

The Christian idea therefore was the restitution of this immediate and direct relation with God, which

[1] Num. viii. 10.

was partly suspended but not abolished by the appointment of a sacerdotal tribe. The Levitical priesthood, like the Mosaic law, had served its temporary purpose. The period of childhood had passed, and the Church of God was now arrived at mature age. The covenant people resumed their sacerdotal functions. But the privileges of the covenant were no longer confined to the limits of a single nation. Every member of the human family was *potentially* a member of the Church, and, as such, a priest of God.

Influence of the Christian ideal.

The influence of this idea on the moral and spiritual growth of the individual believer is too plain to require any comment; but its social effects may call for a passing remark. It will hardly be denied, I think, by those who have studied the history of modern civilization with attention, that this conception of the Christian Church has been mainly instrumental in the emancipation of the degraded and oppressed, in the removal of artificial barriers between class and class, and in the diffusion of a general philanthropy untrammelled by the fetters of party or race; in short, that to it mainly must be attributed the most important advantages which constitute the superiority of modern societies over ancient. Consciously or unconsciously, the idea of an universal priesthood, of the religious equality of all men, which, though not untaught before, was first embodied in the Church of Christ, has worked and is working untold blessings in political institutions and in social life. But the careful student will also observe that this idea has hitherto been very imperfectly apprehended; that throughout the his-

tory of the Church it has been struggling for recognition, at most times discerned in some of its aspects but at all times wholly ignored in others; and that therefore the actual results are a very inadequate measure of its efficacy, if only it could assume due prominence and were allowed free scope in action.

This then is the Christian ideal; a holy season extending the whole year round—a temple confined only by the limits of the habitable world—a priesthood coextensive with the human race.

Practical organization.

Strict loyalty to this conception was not held incompatible with practical measures of organization. As the Church grew in numbers, as new and heterogeneous elements were added, as the early fervour of devotion cooled and strange forms of disorder sprang up, it became necessary to provide for the emergency by fixed rules and definite officers. The community of goods, by which the infant Church had attempted to give effect to the idea of an universal brotherhood, must very soon have been abandoned under the pressure of circumstances. The celebration of the first day in the week at once, the institution of annual festivals afterwards, were seen to be necessary to stimulate and direct the devotion of the believers. The appointment of definite places of meeting in the earliest days, the erection of special buildings for worship at a later date, were found indispensable to the working of the Church. But the Apostles never lost sight of the idea in their teaching. They proclaimed loudly that 'God dwelleth not in temples made by hands.' They indignantly denounced those who 'observed days and months and

Fixed days and places of worship;

but the idea kept in view.

seasons and years.' This language is not satisfied by supposing that they condemned only the temple-worship in the one case, that they reprobated only Jewish sabbaths and new moons in the other. It was against the false principle that they waged war; the principle which exalted the means into an end, and gave an absolute intrinsic value to subordinate aids and expedients. These aids and expedients, for his own sake and for the good of the society to which he belonged, a Christian could not afford to hold lightly or neglect. But they were no part of the *essence* of God's message to man in the Gospel: they must not be allowed to obscure the idea of Christian worship.

Appointment of a ministry.

So it was also with the Christian priesthood. For communicating instruction and for preserving public order, for conducting religious worship and for dispensing social charities, it became necessary to appoint special officers. But the priestly functions and privileges of the Christian people are never regarded as transferred or even delegated to these officers. They are called stewards or messengers of God, servants or ministers of the Church, and the like: but the sacerdotal title is never once conferred upon them. The only priests under the Gospel, designated as such in the New Testament, are the saints, the members of the Christian brotherhood[1].

[1] 1 Pet. ii. 5, 9, Apoc. i. 6, v. 10, xx. 6. The commentator Hilary has expressed this truth with much distinctness: 'In lege nascebantur sacerdotes ex genere Aaron Levitae: nunc autem omnes ex genere sunt sacerdotali, dicente Petro Apostolo, Quia estis genus regale et sacerdotale etc.' (Ambrosiast.

As individuals, all Christians are priests alike. As members of a corporation, they have their several and distinct offices. The similitude of the human body, where each limb or organ performs its own functions, and the health and growth of the whole frame are promoted by the harmonious but separate working of every part, was chosen by St Paul to represent the progress and operation of the Church. In two passages, written at two different stages in his apostolic career, he briefly sums up the offices in the Church with reference to this image. In the earlier[1] he enumerates 'first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, then powers, then gifts of healing, helps, governments, kinds of tongues.' In the second passage[2] the list is briefer; 'some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers.' The earlier enumeration differs chiefly from the later in specifying distinctly certain miraculous powers, this being required by the Apostle's argument which is directed against an exaggerated estimate and abuse of such gifts. Neither list can have been intended to be exhaustive. In both alike the work of converting unbelievers and founding congregations holds the foremost place, while the permanent government and instruction of the several Churches is kept in the background. This prominence was necessary in the earliest age of the Gospel. The apostles, prophets, evangelists, all

Two passages in St Paul relating thereto.

They refer chiefly to the temporary ministry.

on Ephes. iv. 12). The whole passage, to which I shall have occasion to refer again, contains a singularly appreciative account of the relation of the ministry to the congregation.

[1] 1 Cor. xii. 28.

[2] Ephes. iv. 11.

range under the former head. But the permanent ministry, though lightly touched upon, is not forgotten; for under the designation of 'teachers, helps, governments' in the one passage, of 'pastors and teachers' in the other, these officers must be intended. Again in both passages alike it will be seen that great stress is laid on the work of the Spirit. The faculty of governing not less than the utterance of prophecy, the gift of healing not less than the gift of tongues, is an inspiration of the Holy Ghost. But on the other hand in both alike there is an entire silence about priestly functions: for the most exalted office in the Church, the highest gift of the Spirit, conveyed no sacerdotal right which was not enjoyed by the humblest member of the Christian community.

Growing importance of the permanent ministry.

From the subordinate place, which it thus occupies in the notices of St Paul, the permanent ministry gradually emerged, as the Church assumed a more settled form, and the higher but temporary offices, such as the apostolate, fell away. This progressive growth and development of the ministry, until it arrived at its mature and normal state, it will be the object of the following pages to trace.

Definition of terms necessary.

But before proceeding further, some definition of terms is necessary. On no subject has more serious error arisen from the confusion of language. The word 'priest' has two different senses. In the one it is a synonyme for presbyter or elder, and designates the minister who presides over and instructs a Christian congregation: in the other it is equivalent to the Latin sacerdos, the Greek ἱερεύς, or the Hebrew כֹּהֵן, the offerer of sacrifices, who also

performs other mediatorial offices between God and man. How the confusion between these two meanings has affected the history and theology of the Church, it will be instructive to consider in the sequel. At present it is sufficient to say that the word will be used throughout this essay, as it has been used hitherto, in the latter sense only, so that priestly will be equivalent to 'sacerdotal' or 'hieratic.' Etymologically indeed the other meaning is alone correct (for the words priest and presbyter are the same); but convenience will justify its restriction to this secondary and imported sense, since the English language supplies no other rendering of sacerdos or ἱερεύς. On the other hand, when the Christian elder is meant, the longer form 'presbyter' will be employed throughout.

'Priest' and 'presbyter.'

History seems to show decisively that before the middle of the second century each church or organized Christian community had its three orders of ministers, its bishop, its presbyters, and its deacons. On this point there cannot reasonably be two opinions. But at what time and under what circumstances this organization was matured, and to what extent our allegiance is due to it as an authoritative ordinance, are more difficult questions. Some have recognized in episcopacy an institution of divine origin, absolute and indispensable; others have represented it as destitute of all apostolic sanction and authority. Some again have sought for the archetype of the threefold ministry in the Aaronic priesthood; others in the arrangements of synagogue worship. In this clamour of antagonistic

Different views on the origin of the threefold ministry.

opinions history is obviously the sole upright, impartial referee; and the historical mode of treatment will therefore be strictly adhered to in the following investigation. The doctrine in this instance at all events is involved in the history[1].

Ministry appointed to relieve the Apostles.

St Luke's narrative represents the Twelve Apostles in the earliest days as the sole directors and administrators of the Church. For the financial business of the infant community, not less than for its spiritual guidance, they alone are responsible. This state of things could not last long. By the rapid accession of numbers, and still more by the admission of heterogeneous classes into the Church, the work became too vast and too various for them to discharge unaided. To relieve them from the increasing pressure, the inferior and less important functions passed successively into other hands: and thus each grade of the ministry, beginning from the lowest, was created in order.

1. Deacons. Appointment of the Seven.

1. The establishment of the diaconate came first. Complaints had reached the ears of the Apostles from an outlying portion of the community. The Hellenist widows had been overlooked in the daily distribution of food and alms. To remedy this neglect a new office was created. Seven men were appointed whose duty it was to superintend the

[1] The origin of the Christian ministry is ably investigated in Rothe's *Anfänge der Christlichen Kirche etc.* (1837), and Ritschl's *Entstehung der Altkatholischen Kirche* (2nd ed. 1857). These are the most important of the more recent works on the subject with which I am acquainted, and to both of them I wish to acknowledge my obligations, though in many respects I have arrived at results different from either.

public messes[1], and, as we may suppose, to provide in other ways for the bodily wants of the helpless poor. Thus relieved, the Twelve were enabled to devote themselves without interruption 'to prayer and to the ministry of the word.' The Apostles suggested the creation of this new office, but the persons were chosen by popular election and afterwards ordained by the Twelve with imposition of hands. Though the complaint came from the Hellenists, it must not be supposed that the ministrations of the Seven were confined to this class[2]. The object in creating this new office is stated to be not the partial but the entire relief of the Apostles from the serving of tables. This being the case, the appointment of Hellenists (for such they would appear to have been from their names[3]) is a token of the liberal and loving spirit which prompted the Hebrew members of the Church in the selection of persons to fill the office.

The Seven were deacons.

I have assumed that the office thus established represents the later diaconate; for though this point has been much disputed, I do not see how the identity of the two can reasonably be called in question[4]. If the word 'deacon' does not occur

[1] Acts vi. 2 *διακονεῖν τραπέζαις*.

[2] So for instance Vitringa *de Synag.* III. 2. 5, p. 928 sq., and Mosheim *de Reb. Christ.* p. 119, followed by many later writers.

[3] This inference however is far from certain, since many Hebrews bore Greek names, e.g. the Apostles Andrew and Philip.

[4] It is maintained by Vitringa III. 2. 5, p. 920 sq., that the office of the Seven was different from the later diaconate. He quotes Chrysost. *Hom.* 14 *in Act.* (IX. p. 115, ed. Montf.) and Can. 10 of the Quinisextine Council (comp. p. 13, note 1) as favouring his view. With strange perversity

in the passage, yet the corresponding verb and substantive, *διακονεῖν* and *διακονία*, are repeated more than once. The functions moreover are substantially those which devolved on the deacons of the earliest ages, and which still in theory, though not altogether in practice, form the primary duties of the office. Again, it seems clear from the emphasis with which St Luke dwells on the new institution, that he looks on the establishment of this office, not as an isolated incident, but as the initiation of a new order of things in the Church. It is in short one of those representative facts, of which the earlier part of his narrative is almost wholly made up. Lastly, the tradition of the identity of the two offices has been unanimous from the earliest times. Irenæus, the first writer who alludes to the appointment of the Seven, distinctly holds them to have been deacons[1]. The Roman Church some centuries later, though the presbytery had largely increased meanwhile, still restricted the number of deacons to seven, thus preserving the memory of the first institution of this office[2]. And in like manner a canon of the

Böhmer (*Diss. Jur. Eccl.* p. 349 sq.) supposes them to be presbyters, and this account has been adopted even by Ritschl, p. 355 sq. According to another view the office of the Seven branched out into the two later orders of the diaconate and the presbyterate, Lange *Apost. Zeit.* II. i. p. 75.

[1] Iren. i. 26. 3, iii. 12. 10, iv. 15. 1.

[2] In the middle of the third century, when Cornelius writes to Fabius, Rome has 46 presbyters but only 7 deacons, Euseb. *H. E.* vi. 43; see Routh's *Rel. Sacr.* III. p. 23, with his note p. 61. Even in the fourth and fifth centuries the number of Roman deacons still remained constant: see Ambrosiast. on 1 Tim. iii. 13, Sozom. vii. 19 *διάκονοι δὲ παρὰ Ῥωμαίοις εἰσέτι*

Council of Neocæsarea (A.D. 315) enacted that there should be no more than seven deacons in any city however great[1], alleging the apostolic model. This rule, it is true, was only partially observed; but the tradition was at all events so far respected, that the creation of an order of subdeacons was found necessary in order to remedy the inconvenience arising from the limitation[2].

The office was a new institution

The narrative in the Acts, if I mistake not, implies that the office thus created was entirely new. Some writers however have explained the incident as an extension to the Hellenists of an institution which already existed among the Hebrew Christians and is implied in the 'younger men' mentioned in an earlier part of St Luke's history[3]. This view seems not only to be groundless in itself, but also to contradict the general tenour of the narrative. It would appear moreover, that the institution was not merely new within the Christian Church but novel absolutely. There is no reason for connecting it with any prototype existing in the Jewish community. The narrative offers no hint that it was either a continuation of the order of Levites or an adaptation of an office in the synagogue. The philanthropic purpose for which it was established presents no direct point of contact with

νῦν εἰσὶν ἑπτά...παρὰ δὲ τοῖς ἄλλοις ἀδιάφορος ὁ τούτων ἀριθμός.

[1] Concil. Neocæs. c. 14 (Routh *Rel. Sacr.* IV. p. 185): see Bingham's *Antiq.* II. 20. 19. At the Quinisextine or 2nd Trullan council (A.D. 692) this Neocæsarean canon was refuted and rejected: see Hefele *Consiliengesch.* III. p. 304, and Vitringa p. 922.

[2] See Bingham III. 1. 3.

[3] Acts v. 6, 10. This is the view of Mosheim *de Reb. Christ.* p. 114.

not borrowed from the Levitical order,

the known duties of either. The Levite, whose function it was to keep the beasts for slaughter, to cleanse away the blood and offal of the sacrifices, to serve as porter at the temple gates, and to swell the chorus of sacred psalmody, bears no strong resemblance to the Christian deacon, whose ministrations lay among the widows and orphans, and whose time was almost wholly spent in works of charity. And again, the Chazan or attendant in the synagogue, whose duties were confined to the care of the building and the preparation for service, has more in common with the modern parish clerk than with the deacon in the infant Church of Christ[1]. It is therefore a baseless, though a very common, assumption that the Christian diaconate was copied from the arrangements of the synagogue. The Hebrew Chazan is not rendered by 'deacon' in the Greek Testament; but a different word is used instead[2]. We may fairly presume that St Luke dwells at such length on the establishment of the diaconate, because he regards it as a novel creation.

nor from the synagogue.

Teaching only incidental to the office.

Thus the work primarily assigned to the deacons was the relief of the poor. Their office was essentially a 'serving of tables,' as distinguished from the higher function of preaching and instruction. But partly from the circumstances of their position, partly from the personal character of those first

[1] Vitringa (III. 2. 4, p. 914 sq., III. 2. 22, p. 1130 sq.) derives the Christian deacon from the Chazan of the synagogue. Among other objections to this view, the fact that as a rule there was only one Chazan to each synagogue must not be overlooked.

[2] ὑπηρέτης, Luke iv. 20.

appointed, the deacons at once assumed a prominence which is not indicated in the original creation of the office. Moving about freely among the poorer brethren and charged with the relief of their material wants, they would find opportunities of influence which were denied to the higher officers of the Church who necessarily kept themselves more aloof. The devout zeal of a Stephen or a Philip would turn these opportunities to the best account; and thus, without ceasing to be dispensers of alms, they became also ministers of the Word. The Apostles themselves had directed that the persons chosen should be not only 'men of honest report,' but also 'full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom': and this careful foresight, to which the extended influence of the diaconate may be ascribed, proved also the security against its abuse. But still the work of teaching must be traced rather to the capacity of the individual officer than to the direct functions of the office. St Paul, writing thirty years later, and stating the requirements of the diaconate, lays the stress mainly on those qualifications which would be most important in persons moving about from house to house and entrusted with the distribution of alms. While he requires that they shall 'hold the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience,' in other words, that they shall be sincere believers, he is not anxious, as in the case of the presbyters, to secure 'aptness to teach,' but demands especially that they shall be free from certain vicious habits, such as a love of gossiping, and a greed of paltry gain, into which they might easily fall from the nature of their duties[1].

[1] 1 Tim. iii. 8 sq.

Spread of the diaconate to Gentile churches.

From the mother Church of Jerusalem the institution spread to Gentile Christian brotherhoods. By the 'helps[1]' in the First Epistle to the Corinthians (A.D. 57), and by the 'ministration[2]' in the Epistle to the Romans (A.D. 58), the diaconate solely or chiefly seems to be intended; but besides these incidental allusions, the latter epistle bears more significant testimony to the general extension of the office. The strict seclusion of the female sex in Greece and in some Oriental countries necessarily debarred them from the ministrations of men: and to meet the want thus felt, it was found necessary at an early date to admit women to the diaconate. A woman-deacon belonging to the Church of Cenchreæ is mentioned in the Epistle to the Romans[3]. As time advances, the diaconate becomes still more prominent. In the Philippian Church a few years later (about A.D. 62) the deacons take their rank after the presbyters, the two orders together constituting the recognised ministry of the Christian society there[4]. Again, passing over another interval of some years, we find St Paul in the First Epistle to Timothy (about A.D. 66) giving express directions as to the qualifications of men-deacons and women-deacons alike[5]. From the tenour of his language it seems clear that in the Christian communities of proconsular Asia at all events the institution was so common that ministerial organization would be considered incomplete without it. On the other hand we may perhaps infer from the instructions

[1] 1 Cor. xii. 28.
[2] Rom. xii. 7.
[3] Rom. xvi. 1.
[4] Phil. i. 1.
[5] 1 Tim. iii. 8 sq.

which he sends about the same time to Titus in Crete, that he did not consider it indispensable; for while he mentions having given direct orders to his delegate to appoint presbyters in every city, he is silent about a diaconate[1].

2. Presbyters,

2. While the diaconate was thus an entirely new creation, called forth by a special emergency and developed by the progress of events, the early history of the presbyterate was different. If the sacred historian dwells at length on the institution of the lower office but is silent about the first beginnings of the higher, the explanation seems to be, that the latter had not the claim of novelty like the former. The Christian Church in its earliest stage was regarded by the body of the Jewish people as nothing more than a new sect springing up by the side of the old. This was not unnatural: for the first disciples conformed to the religion of their fathers in all essential points, practising circumcision, observing the sabbaths, and attending the temple-worship. The sects in the Jewish commonwealth were not, properly speaking, non-conformists. They only superadded their own special organization to the established religion of their country, which for the most part they were careful to observe. The institution of synagogues was flexible enough to allow free scope for wide divergencies of creed and practice. Different races as the Cyrenians and Alexandrians, different classes of society as the freedmen[2], perhaps also different sects as the Sadducees or the Essenes, each had or

not a new office,

but adopted from the synagogue.

[1] Tit. i. 5 sq.

[2] Acts vi. 9.

could have their own special synagogue[1], where they might indulge their peculiarities without hindrance. As soon as the expansion of the Church rendered some organization necessary, it would form a 'synagogue' of its own. The Christian congregations in Palestine long continued to be designated by this name[2], though the term 'ecclesia' took its place from the very first in heathen countries. With the synagogue itself they would naturally, if not necessarily, adopt the normal government of a synagogue, and a body of elders or presbyters would be chosen to direct the religious worship and partly also to watch over the temporal well-being of the society.

Occasion of its adoption.

Hence the silence of St Luke. When he first mentions the presbyters, he introduces them without preface, as though the institution were a matter of course. But the moment of their introduction is significant. I have pointed out elsewhere[3] that the two persecutions, of which St Stephen and St James were respectively the chief victims, mark two important stages in the diffusion of the Gospel. Their connexion with the internal organization of the Church is not less remarkable. The first results

[1] It is stated, that there were no less than 480 synagogues in Jerusalem. The number is doubtless greatly exaggerated, but must have been very considerable: see Vitringa prol. 4, p. 28, and i. 1. 14, p. 253.

[2] James ii. 2. Epiphanius (xxx. 18, p. 142) says of the Ebionites *συναγωγὴν οὗτοι καλοῦσι τὴν ἑαυτῶν ἐκκλησίαν, καὶ οὐχὶ ἐκκλησίαν*. See also Hieron. *Epist.* cxii. 13 (i. p. 746, ed. Vall.) 'per totas orientis synagogas,' speaking of the Nazaræans; though his meaning is not altogether clear. Comp. *Test. xii. Patr.* Benj. 11.

[3] See *Dissertations on the Apostolic Age*, pp. 53, 58.

directly from the establishment of the lowest order in the ministry, the diaconate. To the second may probably be ascribed the adoption of the next higher grade, the presbytery. This later persecution was the signal for the dispersion of the Twelve on a wider mission. Since Jerusalem would no longer be their home as hitherto, it became necessary to provide for the permanent direction of the Church there; and for this purpose the usual government of the synagogue would be adopted. Now at all events for the first time we read of 'presbyters' in connexion with the Christian brotherhood at Jerusalem[1].

Presbytery of Jerusalem.

From this time forward all official communications with the mother Church are carried on through their intervention. To the presbyters Barnabas and Saul bear the alms contributed by the Gentile Churches[2]. The presbyters are persistently associated with the Apostles, in convening the congress, in the superscription of the decree, and in the general settlement of the dispute between the Jewish and Gentile Christians[3]. By the presbyters St Paul is received many years later on his last visit to Jerusalem, and to them he gives an account of his missionary labours and triumphs[4].

Extension of the office to Gentile Churches.

But the office was not confined to the mother Church alone. Jewish presbyteries existed already in all the principal cities of the dispersion, and Christian presbyteries would early occupy a not less

[1] Acts xi. 30. On the sequence of events at this time see *Galatians* p. 124.

[2] Acts xi. 30.

[3] Acts xv. 2, 4, 6, 22, 23, xvi. 4.

[4] Acts xxi. 18.

wide area. On their very first missionary journey the Apostles Paul and Barnabas are described as appointing presbyters in every church[1]. The same rule was doubtless carried out in all the brotherhoods founded later; but it is mentioned here and here only, because the mode of procedure on this occasion would suffice as a type of the Apostles' dealings elsewhere under similar circumstances.

Presbyters called also bishops,

The name of the presbyter then presents no difficulty. But what must be said of the term 'bishop'? It has been shown that in the apostolic writings the two are only different designations of one and the same office[2]. How and where was this second name originated?

but only in Gentile Churches.

To the officers of Gentile Churches alone is the term applied, as a synonyme for presbyter. At Philippi[3], in Asia Minor[4], in Crete[5], the presbyter is so called. In the next generation the title is employed in a letter written by the Greek Church of Rome to the Greek Church of Corinth[6]. Thus the word would seem to be especially Hellenic.

Possible origin of the term.

Beyond this we are left to conjecture. But if we may assume that the directors of religious and social clubs among the heathen were commonly so called[7], it would naturally occur, if not to the Gentile

[1] Acts xiv. 23.

[2] See *Philippians* p. 96 sq.

[3] Phil. i. 1.

[4] Acts xx. 28, 1 Tim. iii. 1, 2; comp. 1 Pet. ii. 25, v. 2.

[5] Tit. i. 7.

[6] Clem. Rom. 42, 44.

[7] The evidence however is slight: see *Philippians* p. 95, note 2. Some light is thrown on this subject by the fact that the Roman government seems first to have recognised the Christian brotherhoods in their corporate capacity, as burial clubs: see de Rossi *Rom. Sotterr.* i. p. 371.

Christians themselves, at all events to their heathen associates, as a fit designation for the presiding members of the new society. The infant Church of Christ, which appeared to the Jew as a synagogue, would be regarded by the heathen as a confraternity[1]. But whatever may have been the origin of the term, it did not altogether dispossess the earlier name 'presbyter,' which still held its place as a synonyme, even in Gentile congregations[2]. And, when at length the term bishop was appropriated to a higher office in the Church, the latter became again, as it had been at first, the sole designation of the Christian elder[3].

Twofold duties of the presbyter.

The duties of the presbyters were twofold. They were both rulers and instructors of the congregation. This double function appears in St Paul's expression 'pastors and teachers[4],' where, as the form of the original seems to show, the two words describe the same office under different aspects. Though *government* was probably the first conception of the office, yet the work of *teaching* must have fallen to the presbyters from the very first and have assumed

[1] On these clubs or confraternities see Renan *Les Apôtres* p. 351 sq.; comp. *Saint Paul* p. 239.

[2] Acts xx. 17, 1 Tim. v. 17, Tit. i. 5, 1 Pet. v. 1, Clem. Rom. 21, 44.

[3] Other more general designations in the New Testament are οἱ προιστάμενοι (1 Thess. v. 12, Rom. xii. 8: comp. 1 Tim. v. 17), or οἱ ἡγούμενοι (Hebr. xiii. 7, 17, 24). For the former comp. Hermas *Vis.* ii. 4, Justin *Apol.* i. 67 (ὁ προεστώς); for the latter, Clem. Rom. 1, 21, Hermas *Vis.* ii. 2, iii. 9 (οἱ προηγούμενοι).

[4] Ephes. iv. 11 τοὺς δὲ ποιμένας καὶ διδασκάλους. For ποιμαίνειν applied to the ἐπίσκοπος or πρεσβύτερος see Acts xx. 28, 1 Pet. v. 2; comp. 1 Pet. ii. 25.

greater prominence as time went on. With the growth of the Church, the visits of the apostles and evangelists to any individual community must have become less and less frequent, so that the burden of instruction would be gradually transferred from these missionary preachers to the local officers of the congregation. Hence St Paul in two passages, where he gives directions relating to bishops or presbyters, insists specially on the faculty of teaching as a qualification for the position[1]. Yet even here this work seems to be regarded rather as incidental to than as inherent in the office. In the one epistle he directs that double honour shall be paid to those presbyters who have ruled well, but *especially* to such as 'labour in word and doctrine[2],' as though one holding this office might decline the work of instruction. In the other, he closes the list of qualifications with the requirement that the bishop (or presbyter) hold fast the faithful word in accordance with the apostolic teaching, 'that he may be able both to exhort in the healthy doctrine and to confute gainsayers,' alleging as a reason the pernicious activity and growing numbers of the false teachers. Nevertheless there is no ground for supposing that the work of teaching and the work of governing pertained to separate members of the presbyteral college[3]. As each had his special gift, so would he

The function of teaching.

[1] 1 Tim. iii. 2, Tit. i. 9.

[2] 1 Tim. v. 17 μάλιστα οἱ κοπιῶντες ἐν λόγῳ καὶ διδασκαλίᾳ. At a much later date we read of 'presbyteri doctores,' whence it may perhaps be inferred that even then the work of teaching was not absolutely indispensable to the presbyteral office; *Act. Perp. et Fel.* 13, Cyprian *Epist.* 29: see Ritschl p. 352.

[3] The distinction of lay or

devote himself more or less exclusively to the one or the other of these sacred functions.

3. It is clear then that at the close of the apostolic age, the two lower orders of the threefold ministry were firmly and widely established; but traces of the third and highest order, the episcopate properly so called, are few and indistinct. 3. Bishops.

For the opinion hazarded by Theodoret and adopted by many later writers[1], that the same officers in the Church who were first called apostles came afterwards to be designated bishops, is baseless. If the two offices had been identical, the substitution of the one name for the other would have required some explanation. But in fact the functions of the Apostle and the bishop differed widely. The Apostle, like the prophet or the evangelist, held no *local* The office not a continuation of the apostolate.

ruling elders, and ministers proper or teaching elders, was laid down by Calvin and has been adopted as the constitution of several presbyterian Churches. This interpretation of St Paul's language is refuted by Rothe p. 224, Ritschl p. 352 sq., and Schaff *Hist. of Apost. Ch.* II. p. 312, besides older writers such as Vitringa and Mosheim.

[1] On 1 Tim. iii. 1, *τοὺς δὲ νῦν καλουμένους ἐπισκόπους ἀποστόλους ὠνόμαζον· τοῦ δὲ χρόνου προϊόντος τὸ μὲν τῆς ἀποστολῆς ὄνομα τοῖς ἀληθῶς ἀποστόλοις κατέλιπον, τὸ δὲ τῆς ἐπισκοπῆς τοῖς πάλαι καλουμένοις ἀποστόλοις ἐπέθεσαν.* See also his note on Phil. i. 1. Comp. Wordsworth *Theoph. Angl.* c. x., Blunt *First Three Centuries* p. 81. Theodoret, as usual, has borrowed from Theodore of Mopsuestia on 1 Tim. iii. 1, 'Qui vero nunc episcopi nominantur, illi tunc apostoli dicebantur...Beatis vero apostolis decedentibus, illi qui post illos ordinati sunt...grave existimaverunt apostolorum sibi vindicare nuncupationem; diviserunt ergo ipsa nomina etc.' (Raban. Maur. VI. p. 604 D, ed. Migne). Theodore however makes a distinction between the two offices: nor does he, like Theodoret, misinterpret Phil. ii. 25. The commentator Hilary also, on Ephes. iv. 11, says 'apostoli episcopi sunt.'

office. He was essentially, as his name denotes, a missionary, moving about from place to place, founding and confirming new brotherhoods. The only ground on which Theodoret builds his theory is a false interpretation of a passage in St Paul. At the opening of the Epistle to Philippi the presbyters (here called bishops) and deacons are saluted, while in the body of the letter one Epaphroditus is mentioned as an 'apostle' of the Philippians. If 'apostle' here had the meaning which is thus assigned to it, all the three orders of the ministry would be found at Philippi. But this interpretation will not stand. The true Apostle, like St Peter or St John, bears this title as the messenger, the delegate, of Christ Himself: while Epaphroditus is only so styled as the messenger of the Philippian brotherhood; and in the very next clause the expression is explained by the statement that he carried their alms to St Paul[1]. The use of the word here has a parallel in another passage[2], where messengers (or apostles) of the churches are mentioned. It is not therefore to the apostle that we must look for the prototype of the bishop. How far indeed and in what sense the bishop may be called a successor of the Apostles, will be a proper subject for consideration: but the succession at least does not consist in an identity of office.

Phil. ii. 25 wrongly explained.

The history of the name itself suggests a different account of the origin of the episcopate. If bishop was at first used as a synonyme for presbyter and afterwards came to designate the higher officer under whom the presbyters served, the episcopate properly

The episcopate developed out of the presbytery.

[1] Phil. ii. 25, see *Philippians* p. 123.

[2] 2 Cor. viii. 23, see *Galatians* p. 95, note 3.

so called would seem to have been developed from the subordinate office. In other words, the episcopate was formed not out of the apostolic order by localisation but out of the presbyteral by elevation: and the title, which originally was common to all, came at length to be appropriated to the chief among them[1].

St James was the earliest bishop,

If this account be true, we might expect to find in the mother Church of Jerusalem, which as the earliest founded would soonest ripen into maturity, the first traces of this developed form of the ministry. Nor is this expectation disappointed. James the Lord's brother alone, within the period compassed by the apostolic writings, can claim to be regarded as a bishop in the later and more special sense of the term. In the language of St Paul he takes precedence even of the earliest and greatest preachers of the Gospel, St Peter and St John[2], where the affairs of the Jewish Church specially are concerned. In St Luke's narrative he appears as the local representative of the brotherhood in Jerusalem, presiding at the congress, whose decision he suggests and whose decree he appears to have framed[3], receiving the missionary preachers as they

[1] A parallel instance from Athenian institutions will illustrate this usage. The ἐπιστάτης was chairman of a body of ten πρόεδροι, who themselves were appointed in turn by lot to serve from a larger body of fifty πρυτάνεις. Yet we find the ἐπιστάτης not only designated πρύτανις *par excellence* (Demosth. *Timocr.* § 157), but even addressed by this name in the presence of the other πρόεδροι (Thuc. vi. 14).

[2] Gal. ii. 9; see the note.

[3] Acts xv. 13 sq. St James speaks last and apparently with some degree of authority (ἐγὼ κρίνω ver. 19). The decree is clearly framed on his recom-

revisit the mother Church[1], acting generally as the referee in communications with foreign brotherhoods. The place assigned to him in the spurious Clementines, where he is represented as supreme arbiter over the Church universal in matters of doctrine, must be treated as a gross exaggeration. This kind of authority is nowhere conferred upon him in the apostolic writings: but his social and ecclesiastical position, as it appears in St Luke and St Paul, explains how the exaggeration was possible. And this position is the more remarkable if, as seems to have been the case, he was not one of the Twelve[2].

but yet not isolated from his presbytery.

On the other hand, though especially prominent, he appears in the Acts as a member of a body. When St Peter, after his escape from prison, is about to leave Jerusalem, he desires that his deliverance shall be reported to 'James and the brethren[3].' When again St Paul on his last visit to the Holy City goes to see James, we are told that all the presbyters were present[4]. If in some passages St James is named by himself, in others he is omitted and the presbyters alone are mentioned[5]. From this it may be inferred that though holding a position superior to the rest, he was still considered as a member of the presbytery; that he was in fact the head or president of the college. What power this presidency conferred, how far it was recognised as an

mendations, and some indecisive coincidences of style with his epistle have been pointed out.

[1] Acts xxi. 18; comp. xii. 17. See also Gal. i. 19, ii. 12.

[2] See *Dissertations on the Apostolic Age*, p. 1 sq.

[3] Acts xii. 17.

[4] Acts xxi. 18.

[5] Acts xi. 30; comp. xv. 4, 23, xvi. 4.

independent official position, and to what degree it was due to the ascendancy of his personal gifts, are questions, which in the absence of direct information can only be answered by conjecture. But his close relationship with the Lord, his rare energy of character, and his rigid sanctity of life which won the respect even of the unconverted Jews[1], would react upon his office, and may perhaps have elevated it to a level which was not definitely contemplated in its origin.

No bishops as yet in the Gentile Churches.

But while the episcopal office thus existed in the mother Church of Jerusalem from very early days, at least in a rudimentary form, the New Testament presents no distinct traces of such organization in the Gentile congregations. The government of the Gentile churches, as there represented, exhibits two successive stages of development tending in this direction; but the third stage, in which episcopacy definitely appears, still lies beyond the horizon.

Two stages of development:

(1) Occasional supervision by the Apostles themselves.

(1) We have first of all the Apostles themselves exercising the superintendence of the churches under their care, sometimes in person and on the spot, sometimes at a distance by letter or by message. The imaginary picture drawn by St Paul, when he directs the punishment of the Corinthian offender, vividly represents his position in this respect. The members of the church are gathered together, the elders, we may suppose, being seated apart on a dais or tribune; he himself, as president, directs their deliberations, collects their votes, pronounces sentence on the guilty man[2]. How the absence of the apostolic president was actually supplied in this

[1] See *Dissertations on the Apostolic Age*, p. 12 sq. [2] 1 Cor. v. 3 sq.

instance, we do not know. But a council was held; he did direct their verdict 'in spirit though not in person'; and 'the majority' condemned the offender[1]. In the same way St Peter, giving directions to the elders, claims a place among them. The title 'fellow-presbyter,' which he applies to himself[2], would doubtless recal to the memory of his readers the occasions when he himself had presided with the elders and guided their deliberations.

(2) Residence of apostolic delegates.

(2) As the first stage then, the Apostles themselves were the superintendents of each individual church. But the wider spread of the Gospel would diminish the frequency of their visits and impair the efficiency of such supervision. In the second stage therefore we find them, at critical seasons and in important congregations, delegating some trustworthy disciple who should fix his abode in a given place for a time and direct the affairs of the church there. The Pastoral Epistles present this second stage to our view. It is the conception of a later age which represents Timothy as bishop of Ephesus and Titus as bishop of Crete[3]. St Paul's own language implies that the position which they held was temporary. In both cases their term of office is drawing to a close, when the Apostle writes[4]. But the conception is not altogether without foundation. With less permanence but perhaps greater authority, the position occupied by these apostolic delegates nevertheless fairly represents the functions of the

[1] 2 Cor. ii. 6 ἡ ἐπιτιμία αὕτη ἡ ὑπὸ τῶν πλειόνων.

[2] 1 Pet. v. 1.

[3] *Const. Apost.* vii. 46, Euseb. *H. E.* iii. 4, and later writers.

[4] See 1 Tim. i. 3, iii. 14, 2 Tim. iv. 9, 21, Tit. i. 5, iii. 12.

bishop early in the second century. They were in fact the link between the Apostle whose superintendence was occasional and general and the bishop who exercised a permanent supervision over an individual congregation.

The angels in the Apocalypse not bishops.

Beyond this second stage the notices in the apostolic writings do not carry us. The angels of the seven churches indeed are frequently alleged as an exception[1]. But neither does the name 'angel' itself suggest such an explanation[2], nor is this view in keeping with the highly figurative style of this wonderful book. Its sublime imagery seems to be seriously impaired by this interpretation. On the other hand St John's own language gives the true key to the symbolism. 'The seven stars,' so it is

[1] See for instance among recent writers Thiersch *Gesch. der Apost. Kirche* p. 278, Trench *Epistles to the Seven Churches* p. 47 sq. with others. This explanation is as old as the earliest commentators. Rothe supposes that the word *anticipates* the establishment of episcopacy, being a kind of prophetic symbol, p. 423 sq. Others again take the angel to designate the collective ministry, i.e. the whole body of priests and deacons. For various explanations see Schaff *Hist. of Apost. Ch.* II. p. 223.

Rothe (p. 426) supposes that Diotrephes ὁ φιλοπρωτεύων αὐτῶν (3 Joh. 9) was a bishop. This cannot be pronounced impossible, but the language is far too indefinite to encourage such an inference.

[2] It is conceivable indeed that a bishop or chief pastor should be called an angel or messenger of God or of Christ (comp. Hag. i. 13, Mal. ii. 7), but he would hardly be styled an angel of the church over which he presides. See the parallel case of ἀπόστολος above, p. 24. Vitringa (II. 9, p. 550), and others after him, explain ἄγγελος in the Apocalypse by the שליח, the messenger or deputy of the synagogue. These however were only inferior officers, and could not be compared to stars or made responsible for the well-being of the churches; see Rothe p. 504.

explained, 'are the seven angels of the seven churches, and the seven candlesticks are the seven churches[1].' This contrast between the heavenly and the earthly fires—the star shining steadily by its own inherent eternal light, and the lamp flickering and uncertain, requiring to be fed with fuel and tended with care—cannot be devoid of meaning.

True explanation.

The star is the suprasensual counterpart, the heavenly representative; the lamp, the earthly realization, the outward embodiment. Whether the angel is here conceived as an actual person, the celestial guardian, or only as a personification, the idea or spirit of the church, it is unnecessary for my present purpose to consider. But whatever may be the exact conception, he is identified with and made responsible for it to a degree wholly unsuited to any human officer. Nothing is predicated of him, which may not be predicated of it. To him are imputed all its hopes, its fears, its graces, its shortcomings. He is punished with it, and he is rewarded with it. In one passage especially the language applied to the angel seems to exclude the common interpretation. In the message to Thyatira the angel is blamed, because he suffers himself to be led astray by 'his wife Jezebel[2].' In this image of Ahab's idolatrous queen some dangerous and immoral teaching must be personified; for it does violence alike to the general tenour and to the individual expressions in the passage to suppose that an actual woman is

[1] Rev. i. 20.

[2] Rev. ii. 20 *τὴν γυναῖκά σου Ἰεζάβελ*. The word *σου* should probably be retained in the text: or at least, if not a correct reading, it seems to be a correct gloss.

meant. Thus the symbolism of the passage is entirely in keeping. Nor again is this mode of representation new. The 'princes' in the prophecy of Daniel[1] present a very near if not an exact parallel to the angels of the Revelation. Here, as elsewhere, St John seems to adapt the imagery of this earliest apocalyptic book.

Indeed, if with most recent writers we adopt the early date of the Apocalypse of St John, it is scarcely possible that the episcopal organization should have been so mature when it was written. In this case probably not more than two or three years have elapsed from the date of the Pastoral Epistles[2], and this interval seems quite insufficient to account for so great a change in the administration of the Asiatic churches.

Episcopacy established in Gentile Churches before the close of the century.

As late therefore as the year 70 no distinct signs of episcopal government have hitherto appeared in Gentile Christendom. Yet unless we have recourse to a sweeping condemnation of received documents, it seems vain to deny that early in the second century the episcopal office was firmly and widely established. Thus during the last three decades of the first century, and consequently during the lifetime of the latest surviving Apostle, this change must have been brought about. But the circumstances under which it was effected are shrouded in darkness; and various attempts have been made to read the obscure enigma. Of several solutions

[1] Dan. x. 13, 20, 21.

[2] The date of the Pastoral Epistles may be and probably is as late as A.D. 66 or 67; while the Apocalypse on this hypothesis was written not later than A.D. 70.

offered one at least deserves special notice. If Rothe's view cannot be accepted as final, its examination will at least serve to bring out the conditions of the problem: and for this reason I shall state and discuss it as briefly as possible[1]. For the words in which the theory is stated I am myself responsible.

Rothe's solution.

Importance of the crisis.

'The epoch to which we last adverted marks an important crisis in the history of Christianity. The Church was distracted and dismayed by the growing dissensions between the Jewish and Gentile brethren and by the menacing apparition of Gnostic heresy. So long as its three most prominent leaders were living, there had been some security against the extravagance of parties, some guarantee of harmonious combination among diverse churches. But St Peter, St Paul, and St James, were carried away by death almost at the same time and in the face of this great emergency. Another blow too had fallen: the long-delayed judgment of God on the once Holy City was delayed no more. With the overthrow of Jerusalem the visible centre of the Church was removed. The keystone of the fabric was withdrawn, and the whole edifice threatened with ruin. There was a crying need for some organization which should cement together the diverse elements of Christian society and preserve it from disintegration.'

Origin of the Catholic Church.

'Out of this need the Catholic Church arose. Christendom had hitherto existed as a number of distinct isolated congregations, drawn in the same

[1] See Rothe's *Anfänge etc.* pp. 354—392. Rothe's account of the origin of episcopacy is assailed (on grounds in many respects differing from those which I have urged) by Baur *Ursprung des Episcopats* p. 39 sq., and Ritschl p. 410 sq.

direction by a common faith and common sympathies, accidentally linked one with another by the personal influence and apostolic authority of their common teachers, but not bound together in a harmonious whole by any permanent external organization. Now at length this great result was brought about. The magnitude of the change effected during this period may be measured by the difference in the constitution and conception of the Christian Church as presented in the Pastoral Epistles of St Paul and the letters of St Ignatius respectively.'

Agency of the surviving Apostles.

'By whom then was the new constitution organized? To this question only one answer can be given. This great work must be ascribed to the surviving Apostles. St John especially, who built up the speculative theology of the Church, was mainly instrumental in completing its external constitution also; for Asia Minor was the centre from which the new movement spread. St John however was not the only Apostle or early disciple who lived in this province. St Philip is known to have settled in Hierapolis[1]. St Andrew also seems to have dwelt in these parts[2]. The silence of history clearly proclaims the fact which the voice of history but faintly suggests. If we hear nothing more of the Apostles' missionary labours, it is because they had organized an united Church, to which they had transferred the work of evangelization.'

Evidence of a second Apostolic Council.

'Of such a combined effort on the part of the Apostles, resulting in a definite ecclesiastical polity, in

[1] Papias in Euseb. *H. E.* iii. 39; Polycrates and Caius in Euseb. *H. E.* iii. 31.

[2] Muratorian Canon (circ. 170 A.D.), Routh *Rel. Sacr.* i. p. 394.

an united Catholic Church, no direct account is preserved: but incidental notices are not wanting; and in the general paucity of information respecting the whole period more than this was not to be expected[1].'

Hegesippus.

'(1) Eusebius relates that after the martyrdom of St James and the fall of Jerusalem, the remaining Apostles and personal disciples of the Lord, with His surviving relations, met together and after consultation unanimously appointed Symeon the son of Clopas to the vacant see[2]. It can hardly be doubted that Eusebius in this passage quotes from the earlier historian Hegesippus, from whom he has derived the other incidents in the lives of James and Symeon: and we may well believe that this council discussed larger questions than the appointment of a single bishop, and that the constitution and prospects of the Church generally came under deliberation. It may have been on this occasion that the surviving Apostles partitioned out the world among them, and 'Asia was assigned to John[3].'

Irenæus.

'(2) A fragment of Irenæus points in the same direction. Writing of the holy eucharist he says, 'They who have paid attention to the second ordi-

[1] Besides the evidence which I have stated and discussed in the text, Rothe also brings forward a fragment of the *Praedicatio Pauli* (preserved in the tract *de Baptismo Haereticorum*, which is included among Cyprian's works, app. p. 30, ed. Fell; see *Dissertations on the Apostolic Age*, p. 111, note 2), where the writer mentions a meeting of St Peter and St Paul in Rome. The main question however is so slightly affected thereby, that I have not thought it necessary to investigate the value and bearing of this fragment.

[2] Euseb. *H. E.* iii. 11.

[3] According to the tradition reported by Origen as quoted in Euseb. *H. E.* iii. 1.

nances of the Apostles know that the Lord appointed a new offering in the new covenant[1].' By these 'second ordinances' must be understood some later decrees or injunctions than those contained in the apostolic epistles: and these would naturally be framed and promulgated by such a council as the notice of Eusebius suggests.'

Clement of Rome.

'(3) To the same effect St Clement of Rome writes, that the Apostles, having appointed elders in every church and foreseeing the disputes which would arise, 'afterwards added a codicil (supplementary direction) that if they should fall asleep, other approved men should succeed to their office[2].' Here the pronouns 'they,' 'their,' must refer, not to the first appointed presbyters, but to the Apostles themselves. Thus interpreted, the passage contains a distinct notice of the institution of bishops as successors of the Apostles; while in the word 'afterwards' is involved an allusion to the later council to which the 'second ordinances' of Irenæus also refer[3].'

[1] One of the Pfaffian fragments, no. xxxviii. p. 854 in Stieren's edition of Irenæus (vol. I.).

[2] Clem. Rom. § 44 *κατέστησαν τοὺς προειρημένους* (sc. *πρεσβυτέρους*) *καὶ μεταξὺ †ἐπινομὴν †δεδώκασιν, ὅπως, ἐὰν κοιμηθῶσιν, διαδέξωνται ἕτεροι δεδοκιμασμένοι ἄνδρες τὴν λειτουργίαν αὐτῶν.* The interpretation of the passage depends on the persons intended in *κοιμηθῶσιν* and *αὐτῶν* (see the notes on the passage).

[3] A much more explicit though somewhat later authority may be quoted in favour of his view. The Ambrosian Hilary on Ephes. iv. 12, speaking of the change from the presbyteral to the episcopal form of government, says 'immutata est ratio, *prospiciente concilio*, ut non ordo etc.' If the reading be correct, I suppose he was thinking of the Apostolic Constitutions. See also the ex-

'These notices seem to justify the conclusion that immediately after the fall of Jerusalem a council of the Apostles and first teachers of the Gospel was held to deliberate on the crisis, and to frame measures for the well-being of the Church. The centre of the system then organized was episcopacy, which at once secured the compact and harmonious working of each individual congregation, and as the link of communication between separate brotherhoods formed the whole into one undivided Catholic Church. Recommended by this high authority, the new constitution was immediately and generally adopted.'

Results of the Council.

Value of Rothe's theory.

This theory, which is maintained with much ability and vigour, attracted considerable notice, as being a new defence of episcopacy advanced by a member of a presbyterian Church. On the other hand, its intrinsic value seems to have been unduly depreciated; for, if it fails to give a satisfactory solution, it has at least the merit of stating the conditions of the problem with great distinctness, and of pointing out the direction to be followed. On this account it seemed worthy of attention.

The evidence examined.

Hegesippus.

It must indeed be confessed that the historical notices will not bear the weight of the inference built upon them. (1) The account of Hegesippus (for to Hegesippus the statement in Eusebius may fairly be ascribed) confines the object of this gathering to the appointment of a successor to St James. If its deliberations had exerted that vast and permanent influence on the future of the Church which Rothe's theory supposes, it is scarcely possible that

pression of St Jerome on Tit. i. 5 (quoted below, p. 39) 'in toto orbe decretum est.'

this early historian should have been ignorant of the fact or knowing it should have passed it over in silence. (2) The genuineness of the Pfaffian fragments of Irenæus must always remain doubtful[1]. Irenæus. Independently of the mystery which hangs over their publication, the very passage quoted throws great suspicion on their authorship; for the expression in question[2] seems naturally to refer to the so-called Apostolic Constitutions, which have been swelled to their present size by the accretions of successive generations, but can hardly have existed even in a rudimentary form in the age of Irenæus, or if existing have been regarded by him as genuine. If he had been acquainted with such later ordinances issued by the authority of an apostolic council, is it conceivable that in his great work on heresies he should have omitted to quote a sanction so unquestionable, where his main object is to show that the doctrine of the Catholic Church in his day represented the true teaching of the Apostles, and his main argument the fact that the Catholic bishops of his time derived their office by direct succession from the Apostles? (3) The passage in the epistle Clement. of St Clement cannot be correctly interpreted by Rothe: for his explanation, though elaborately de-

[1] The controversial treatises on either side are printed in Stieren's Irenæus II. p. 381 sq. It is sufficient here to state that shortly after the transcription of these fragments by Pfaff, the Turin MS from which they were taken disappeared; so that there was no means of testing the accuracy of the transcriber or ascertaining the character of the MS.

[2] The expression *αἱ δεύτεραι τῶν ἀποστόλων διατάξεις* closely resembles the language of these Constitutions; see Hippol. p. 74, 82 (Lagarde).

fended, disregards the purpose of the letter. The Corinthian Church is disturbed by a spirit of insubordination. Presbyters, who have faithfully discharged their duties, have nevertheless been ruthlessly expelled from office. St Clement writes in the name of the Roman Church to correct these irregularities. He reminds the Corinthians that the presbyteral office was established by the Apostles, who not only themselves appointed elders, but also gave directions that the vacancies caused from time to time by death should be filled up by other men of character, thus providing for a succession in the ministry. Consequently in these unworthy feuds they were setting themselves in opposition to officers of repute either actually nominated by Apostles, or appointed by those so nominated in accordance with the apostolic injunctions. There is no mention of episcopacy, properly so called, throughout the epistle; for in the language of St Clement, 'bishop' and 'presbyter' are still synonymous terms[1]. Thus the pronouns 'they,' 'their,' refer naturally to the presbyters first appointed by the Apostles themselves. Whether (supposing the reading to be correct[2]) Rothe has rightly translated ἐπινομήν 'a codicil,' it is unnecessary to enquire, as the rendering does not materially affect the question.

Episcopacy not a sudden creation,

Nor again does it appear that the rise of episcopacy was so sudden and so immediate, that an authoritative order issuing from an apostolic council alone can explain the phenomenon. In the mysterious period which comprises the last thirty years

[1] See *Philippians* pp. 97, 98.

[2] The right reading is probably ἐπιμονήν; see the notes on the passage.

of the first century, and on which history is almost wholly silent, episcopacy must, it is true, have been mainly developed. But before this period its beginnings may be traced, and after the close it is not yet fully matured. It seems vain to deny with Rothe [1] that the position of St James in the mother Church furnished the precedent and the pattern of the later episcopate. It appears equally mistaken to maintain, as this theory requires, that at the close of the first and the beginning of the second century the organization of all churches alike had arrived at the same stage of development and exhibited the episcopate in an equally perfect form.

but matured by a critical emergency

On the other hand, the emergency which consolidated the episcopal form of government is correctly and forcibly stated. It was remarked long ago by Jerome, that 'before factions were introduced into religion by the prompting of the devil,' the churches were governed by a council of elders, 'but as soon as each man began to consider those whom he had baptized to belong to himself and not to Christ, it was decided throughout the world that one elected from among the elders should be placed over the rest, so that the care of the church should devolve on him and the seeds of schism be removed[2].' And again in another passage he writes to the same effect; 'When afterwards one presbyter was elected that he might be placed over the rest, this was done as a remedy against schism, that each man might not drag to himself and thus break up the Church

[1] p. 264 sq.

[2] On Tit. i. 5 (VII. p. 694, ed. Vall.).

of Christ[1].' To the dissensions of Jew and Gentile converts, and to the disputes of Gnostic false teachers, the development of episcopacy may be mainly ascribed.

and in Asia Minor under the influence of St John.

Nor again is Rothe probably wrong as to the authority mainly instrumental in effecting the change. Asia Minor was the adopted home of more than one Apostle after the fall of Jerusalem. Asia Minor too was the nurse, if not the mother, of episcopacy in the Gentile Churches. So important an institution, developed in a Christian community of which St John was the living centre and guide, could hardly have grown up without his sanction: and, as will be seen presently, early tradition very distinctly connects his name with the appointment of bishops in these parts.

Manner of its development.

But to the question how this change was brought about, a somewhat different answer must be given. We have seen that the needs of the Church and the ascendancy of his personal character placed St James at the head of the Christian brotherhood in Jerusalem. Though remaining a member of the presbyteral council he was singled out from the rest and placed in a position of superior responsibility. His exact power it would be impossible, and it is unnecessary, to define. When therefore after the fall of the city St John with other surviving Apostles removed to Asia Minor and found there manifold irregularities and threatening symptoms of disruption, he would not unnaturally encourage an approach in these Gentile Churches to the same organization which had been signally blessed, and

[1] *Epist.* cxlvi. *ad Evang.* (I. p. 1082).

proved effectual in holding together the mother Church amid dangers not less serious. The existence of a council or college necessarily supposes a presidency of some kind, whether this presidency be assumed by each member in turn, or lodged in the hands of a single person[1]. It was only necessary therefore for him to give permanence, definiteness, stability, to an office which already existed in germ. There is no reason however for supposing that any direct ordinance was issued to the churches. The evident utility and even pressing need of such an office, sanctioned by the most venerated name in Christendom, would be sufficient to secure its wide though gradual reception. Such a reception, it is true, supposes a substantial harmony and freedom of intercourse among the churches, which remained undisturbed by the troubles of the times; but the silence of history is not at all unfavourable to this supposition. In this way, during the historical

[1] The Ambrosian Hilary on Ephes. iv. 12 seems to say that the senior member was president; but this may be mere conjecture. The constitution of the synagogue does not aid materially in settling this question. In the New Testament at all events ἀρχισυνάγωγος is only another name for an *elder* of the synagogue (Mark v. 22, Acts xiii. 15, xviii. 8, 17; comp. Justin *Dial. c. Tryph.* § 137), and therefore corresponds not to the bishop but to the presbyter of the Christian Church. Sometimes however ἀρχισυνάγωγος appears to denote the president of the council of elders: see Vitringa II. 2, p. 586 sq., III. 1, p. 610 sq. The opinions of Vitringa must be received with caution, as his tendency to press the resemblance between the government of the Jewish synagogue and the Christian Church is strong. The real likeness consists in the council of presbyters; but the threefold order of the Christian ministry as a whole seems to have no counterpart in the synagogue.

blank which extends over half a century after the fall of Jerusalem, episcopacy was matured and the Catholic Church consolidated[1].

This view supported by the notices of individual churches.

At all events, when we come to trace the early history of the office in the principal churches of Christendom in succession, we shall find all the facts consistent with the account adopted here, while some of them are hardly reconcileable with any other. In this review it will be convenient to commence with the mother Church, and to take the others in order, as they are connected either by neighbourhood or by political or religious sympathy.

Jerusalem.

1. The Church of Jerusalem, as I have already pointed out, presents the earliest instance of a bishop. A certain official prominence is assigned to James the Lord's brother, both in the Epistles of St Paul and in the Acts of the Apostles. And the inference drawn from the notices in the canonical Scriptures is borne out by the tradition of the next ages. As early as the middle of the second century all parties concur in representing him as a bishop in the strict sense of the term[2]. In this respect Catholic Christians and Ebionite Christians hold the same language: the testimony of Hegesippus on the one hand is matched by the testimony of the Clementine writings on the other. On his death,

St James.

[1] The expression 'Catholic Church' is found first in the Ignatian letter to the Smyrnæans § 8. In the Martyrdom of Polycarp it occurs several times, inscr. and §§ 8, 16, 19. On its meaning see Westcott *Canon* p. 28, note (4th ed.).

[2] Hegesipp. in Euseb. *H. E.* ii. 23, iv. 22; *Clem. Hom.* xi. 35, Ep. Petr. init., and Ep. Clem. init.; *Clem. Recogn.* i. 43, 68, 73; Clem. Alex. in Euseb. ii. 1; *Const. Apost.* v. 8, vi. 14, viii. 35, 46.

which is recorded as taking place immediately before the war of Vespasian, Symeon was appointed in his place[1]. Hegesippus, who is our authority for this statement, distinctly regards Symeon as holding the same office with James, and no less distinctly calls him a bishop. The same historian also mentions the circumstance that one Thebuthis (apparently on this occasion), being disappointed of the bishopric, raised a schism and attempted to corrupt the virgin purity of the Church with false doctrine. As Symeon died in the reign of Trajan at an advanced age, it is not improbable that Hegesippus was born during his lifetime. Of the successors of Symeon a complete list is preserved by Eusebius[2]. The fact however that it comprises thirteen names within a period of less than thirty years must throw suspicion on its accuracy. A succession so rapid is hardly consistent with the known tenure of life offices in ordinary cases: and if the list be correct, the frequent changes must be attributed to the troubles and uncertainties of the times[3]. If Eusebius here also had derived his information from

Symeon.

Later bishops.

[1] Hegesipp. in Euseb. *H. E.* iv. 22.

[2] *H. E.* iv. 5. The episcopate of Justus the successor of Symeon commences about A.D. 108: that of Marcus the first Gentile bishop, A.D. 136. Thus thirteen bishops occupy only about twenty-eight years. Even after the foundation of Aelia Capitolina the succession is very rapid. In the period from Marcus (A.D. 136) to Narcissus (A.D. 190) we count fifteen bishops. The repetition of the same names however suggests that some conflict was going on during this interval.

[3] Parallels nevertheless may be found in the annals of the papacy. Thus from A.D. 882 to A.D. 904 there were thirteen popes: and in other times of trouble the succession has been almost as rapid.

Hegesippus, it must at least have had some solid foundation in fact; but even then the alternation between Jerusalem and Pella, and the possible confusion of the bishops with other prominent members of the presbytery, might introduce much error. It appears however that in this instance he was indebted to less trustworthy sources of information[1]. The statement that after the foundation of Aelia Capitolina (A.D. 136) Marcus presided over the mother Church, as its first Gentile bishop, need not be questioned; and beyond this point it is unnecessary to carry the investigation[2].

Other sees in Palestine and neighbouring countries.

Of other bishops in PALESTINE and the neighbourhood, before the latter half of the second century, no trustworthy notice is preserved, so far as I know. During the Roman episcopate of Victor however (about A.D. 190), we find three bishops, Theophilus of Cæsarea, Cassius of Tyre, and Clarus of Ptolemais, in conjunction with Narcissus of Jerusalem, writing an encyclical letter in favour of the western view in the Paschal controversy[3]. If indeed any reliance could be placed on the Clementine writings, the episcopate of Palestine was matured at a very early

[1] This may be inferred from a comparison of *H. E.* iv. 5 *τοσοῦτον ἐξ ἐγγράφων παρείληφα* with *H. E.* v. 12 *αἱ τῶν αὐτόθι διαδοχαὶ περιέχουσι*. His information was probably taken from a list kept at Jerusalem; but the case of the spurious correspondence with Abgarus preserved in the archives of Edessa (*H. E.* i. 13) shows how treacherous such sources of information were.

[2] Narcissus, who became bishop of Jerusalem in 190 A.D., might well have preserved the memory of much earlier times. His successor Alexander, in whose favour he resigned A.D. 214, speaks of him as still living at the advanced age of 116 (Euseb. *H. E.* vi. 11).

[3] Euseb. *H. E.* v. 25.

date: for St Peter is there represented as appointing bishops in every city which he visits, in Cæsarea, Tyre, Sidon, Berytus, Tripolis, and Laodicea[1]. And though the fictions of this theological romance have no direct historical value, it is hardly probable that the writer would have indulged in such statements, unless an early development of the episcopate in these parts had invested his narrative with an air of probability. The institution would naturally spread from the Church of Jerusalem to the more important communities in the neighbourhood, even without the direct intervention of the Apostles.

Antioch. 2. From the mother Church of the Hebrews we pass naturally to the metropolis of Gentile Christendom. Antioch is traditionally reported to have received its first bishop Evodius from St Peter[2]. The story may perhaps rest on some basis of truth, though no confidence can be placed in this class of statements, unless they are known to have been derived from some early authority. But of Ignatius, who stands second in the traditional catalogue of Antiochene bishops, we can speak with more confidence. He is designated a bishop by very early authors, and he himself speaks as such. He writes to one bishop, Polycarp; and he mentions several others. Again and again he urges the duty of obedience to their bishops on his correspondents. And, lest it should be supposed that he uses the term in its earlier sense as a synonyme for presbyter,

Evodius.

Ignatius.

[1] *Clem. Hom.* iii. 68 sq. (Cæsarea), vii. 5 (Tyre), vii. 8 (Sidon), vii. 12 (Berytus), xi. 36 (Tripolis), xx. 23 (Laodicea): comp. *Clem. Recogn.* iii. 65, 66, 74, vi. 15, x. 68.

[2] *Const. Apost.* vii. 46, Euseb. *H. E.* iii. 22.

he names in conjunction the three orders of the ministry, the bishop, the presbyter, and the deacons[1]. Altogether it is plain that he looks upon the episcopal system as the one recognised and authoritative form of government in all those churches with which he is most directly concerned. It may be suggested indeed that he would hardly have enforced the claims of episcopacy, unless it were an object of attack, and its comparatively recent origin might therefore be inferred: but still some years would be required before it could have assumed that mature and definite form which it has in his letters. It seems impossible to decide, and it is needless to investigate, the exact date of the epistles of St Ignatius: but we cannot do wrong in placing them during the earliest years of the second century.

Later bishops.

The immediate successor of Ignatius is reported to have been Hero[2]: and from his time onward the list of Antiochene bishops is complete[3]. If the authenticity of the list, as a whole, is questionable, two bishops of Antioch at least during the second century, Theophilus and Serapion, are known as historical persons.

Clementine writings.

If the Clementine writings emanated, as seems probable, from Syria or Palestine[4], this will be the proper place to state their attitude with regard to episcopacy. Whether the opinions there advanced exhibit the recognised tenets of a sect or congregation, or the private views of the individual writer

[1] e.g. *Polyc.* 6. I single out this passage from several which might be alleged, because it is found in the Syriac. See below, p. 83.

[2] Euseb. *H. E.* iii. 36.

[3] Euseb. *H. E.* iv. 20.

[4] See *Dissertations on the Apostolic Age*, pp. 98 sq.

or writers, will probably never be ascertained; but, whatever may be said on this point, these heretical books outstrip the most rigid orthodoxy in their reverence for the episcopal office. Monarchy is represented as necessary to the peace of the Church[1]. The bishop occupies the seat of Christ and must be honoured as the image of God[2]. And hence St Peter, as he moves from place to place, ordains bishops everywhere, as though this were the crowning act of his missionary labours[3]. The divergence of the Clementine doctrine from the tenets of Catholic Christianity only renders this phenomenon more remarkable, when we remember the very early date of these writings; for the Homilies cannot well be placed later than the end, and should perhaps be placed before the middle of the second century.

Syrian Church.

3. We have hitherto been concerned only with the Greek Church of Syria. Of the early history of the Syrian Church, strictly so called, no trustworthy account is preserved. The documents which profess to give information respecting it are comparatively late: and while their violent anachronisms discredit them as a whole, it is impossible to separate the fabulous from the historic[4]. It should be remarked however, that they exhibit a high

[1] *Clem. Hom.* iii. 62.

[2] *Clem. Hom.* iii. 62, 66, 70. See below, p. 89.

[3] See the references given above, p. 45, note 1.

[4] *Ancient Syriac Documents* (ed. Cureton). The *Doctrine of Addai* has recently been published complete by Dr Phillips, London 1876. This work at all events must be old, for it was found by Eusebius in the archives of Edessa (*H. E.* i. 13); but it abounds in gross anachronisms and probably is not earlier than the middle of the 3rd century: see Zahn *Gött. Gel. Anz.* 1877, p. 161 sq.

sacerdotal view of the episcopate as prevailing in these churches from the earliest times of which any record is preserved[1].

Asia Minor.

4. Asia Minor follows next in order; and here we find the widest and most unequivocal traces of episcopacy at an early date. Clement of Alexandria distinctly states that St John went about from city to city, his purpose being 'in some places to establish bishops, in others to consolidate whole churches, in others again to appoint to the clerical office some one of those who had been signified by the Spirit[2].' The sequence of bishops, writes Tertullian in like manner of Asia Minor, 'traced back to its origin will be found to rest on the authority of John[3].' And a writer earlier than either speaks of St John's 'fellow-disciples and bishops[4]' as gathered about him. The conclusiveness even of such testimony might perhaps be doubted, if it were not supported by other more direct evidence. At the beginning of the second century the letters of Ignatius, even if we accept as genuine only the part contained in the Syriac, mention by name two bishops in these parts, Onesimus of Ephesus and Polycarp of Smyrna[5]. Of the former nothing more is known:

Activity of St John in proconsular Asia.

Onesimus. Polycarp.

[1] See for instance pp. 13, 16, 18, 21, 23, 24, 26, 29, 30, 33, 34, 35, 42, 71 (Cureton). The succession to the episcopate is conferred by the 'Hand of Priesthood' through the Apostles, who received it from our Lord, and is derived ultimately from Moses and Aaron (p. 24).

[2] *Quis Div. Salv.* 42 (p. 959).

[3] *Adv. Marc.* iv. 5.

[4] Muratorian Fragment, Routh *Rel. Sacr.* i. p. 394. Irenæus too, whose experience was drawn chiefly from Asia Minor, more than once speaks of bishops appointed by the Apostles, iii. 3. 1, v. 20. 1.

[5] *Polyc.* inscr., *Ephes.* 1.

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the latter evidently writes as a bishop, for he distinguishes himself from his presbyters[1], and is expressly so called by other writers besides Ignatius. His pupil Irenæus says of him, that he had 'not only been instructed by Apostles and conversed with many who had seen Christ, but had also been established by Apostles in Asia as bishop in the Church at Smyrna[2].' Polycrates also, a younger contemporary of Polycarp and himself bishop of Ephesus, designates him by this title[3]; and again in the letter written by his own church and giving an account of his martyrdom he is styled 'bishop of the Church in Smyrna[4].' As Polycarp survived the middle of the second century, dying at a very advanced age (A.D. 155 or 156), the possibility of error on this point seems to be excluded: and indeed all historical evidence must be thrown aside as worthless, if testimony so strong can be disregarded.

Ignatian letters.

It is probable however, that we should receive as genuine not only those portions of the Ignatian letters which are represented in the Syriac, but also the Greek text in its shorter form. Under any circumstances, this text can hardly have been made later than the middle of the second century[5], and its witness would still be highly valuable, even if it were a forgery. The staunch advocacy of the episcopate which distinguishes these writings is well known and will be considered hereafter. At

[1] Polyc. *Phil.* init.

[2] Iren. iii. 3. 4. Comp. Tertull. *de Praescr.* 32.

[3] In Euseb. v. 24.

[4] *Mart. Polyc.* 16. Polycarp is called 'bishop of Smyrna' also in *Mart. Ignat. Ant.* 3.

[5] See below, p. 83, note.

present we are only concerned with the historical testimony which they bear to the wide extension and authoritative claims of the episcopal office. Besides Polycarp and Onesimus, mentioned in the Syriac, the writer names also Damas bishop of Magnesia[1] and Polybius bishop of Tralles[2]; and he urges on the Philadelphians also the duty of obedience to their bishop[3], though the name is not given. Under any circumstances it seems probable that these were not fictitious personages, for, even if he were a forger, he would be anxious to give an air of reality to his writings: but whether or not we regard his testimony as indirectly affecting the age of Ignatius, for his own time at least it must be regarded as valid.

Bishops of Hierapolis.

But the evidence is not confined to the persons and the churches already mentioned. Papias, who was a friend of Polycarp and had conversed with personal disciples of the Lord, is commonly designated bishop of Hierapolis[4]; and we learn from a younger contemporary Serapion[5], that Claudius Apollinaris, known as a writer against the Montanists, also held this see in the reign of M. Aurelius.

Sagaris.

Again Sagaris the martyr, who seems to have perished in the early years of M. Aurelius, about A.D. 165[6], is designated bishop of Laodicea by an author writing towards the close of the same century, who also alludes to Melito the contem-

Melito.

[1] *Magn.* 2.
[2] *Trall.* 1.
[3] *Philad.* 1.
[4] Euseb. *H. E.* iii. 36.
[5] In Euseb. *H. E.* v. 19.
[6] On the authority of his contemporary Melito in Euseb. *H. E.* iv. 26: see *Colossians* p. 63.

porary of Sagaris as holding the see of Sardis[1]. The authority just quoted, Polycrates of Ephesus, who flourished in the last decade of the century, says moreover that he had had seven relations bishops before him, himself being the eighth, and that he followed their tradition[2]. When he wrote he had been 'sixty-five years in the Lord'; so that even if this period date from the time of his birth and not of his conversion or baptism, he must have been born scarcely a quarter of a century after the death of the last surviving Apostle, whose latest years were spent in the very Church over which Polycrates himself presided. It appears moreover from his language that none of these relations to whom he refers were surviving when he wrote.

Polycrates and his relations.

Thus the evidence for the early and wide extension of episcopacy throughout proconsular Asia, the scene of St John's latest labours, may be considered irrefragable. And when we pass to other districts of Asia Minor, examples are not wanting though these are neither so early nor so frequent. Marcion a native of Sinope is related to have been the son of a Christian bishop[3]: and Marcion himself had elaborated his theological system before the middle of the second century. Again, a bishop of Eumenia, Thraseas by name, is stated by Polycrates to have been martyred and buried at Smyrna[4]; and, as he is mentioned

Bishops in other parts of Asia Minor.

[1] Polycrates in Euseb. *H. E.* v. 24. Melito's office may be inferred from the contrast implied in περιμένων τὴν ἀπὸ τῶν οὐρανῶν ἐπισκοπήν.

[2] In Euseb. *H. E.* v. 24. See *Dissertations on the Apostolic Age*, p. 121, note.

[3] [Tertull.] *adv. omn. haeres.* 6.

[4] In Euseb. *H. E.* v. 24.

in connexion with Polycarp, it may fairly be supposed that the two suffered in the same persecution. Dionysius of Corinth moreover, writing to Amastris and the other churches of Pontus (about A.D. 170), mentions Palmas the bishop of this city[1]: and when the Paschal controversy breaks out afresh under Victor of Rome, we find this same Palmas putting his signature first to a circular letter, as the senior of the bishops of Pontus[2]. An anonymous writer also, who took part in the Montanist controversy, speaks of two bishops of repute, Zoticus of Comana and Julianus of Apamea, as having resisted the impostures of the false prophetesses[3]. But indeed the frequent notices of encyclical letters written and synods held towards the close of the second century are a much more powerful testimony to the wide extension of episcopacy throughout the provinces of Asia Minor than the incidental mention of individual names. On one such occasion Polycrates speaks of the 'crowds' of bishops whom he had summoned to confer with him on the Paschal question[4].

Episcopal synods.

Macedonia and Greece.

5. As we turn from Asia Minor to MACEDONIA and GREECE, the evidence becomes fainter and scantier. This circumstance is no doubt due partly to the fact that these churches were much less active and important during the second century than the Christian communities of Asia Minor,

[1] In Euseb. *H. E.* iv. 23.

[2] Euseb. *H. E.* v. 23.

[3] In Euseb. *H. E.* v. 16. As Apamea on the Mæander is mentioned at the end of the chapter, probably this is the place meant.

[4] In Euseb. *H. E.* v. 24 πολλὰ πλήθη.

but the phenomena cannot perhaps be wholly explained by this consideration. When Tertullian in one of his rhetorical flights challenges the heretical teachers to consult the apostolic churches, where 'the very sees of the Apostles still preside,' adding, 'If Achaia is nearest to you, then you have Corinth; if you are not far from Macedonia, you have Philippi, you have the Thessalonians; if you can reach Asia, you have Ephesus[1]'; his main argument was doubtless just, and even the language would commend itself to its own age, for episcopacy was the only form of government known or remembered in the church when he wrote: but a careful investigation scarcely allows, and certainly does not encourage us, to place Corinth and Philippi and Thessalonica in the same category with Ephesus as regards episcopacy. The term 'apostolic see' was appropriate to the latter; but so far as we know, it cannot be strictly applied to the former. During the early years of the second century, when episcopacy was firmly established in the principal churches of Asia Minor, Polycarp sends a letter to the Philippians. He writes in the name of himself and his presbyters; he gives advice to the Philippians respecting the obligations and the authority of presbyters and deacons; he is minute in his instructions respecting one individual presbyter, Valens by name, who had been guilty of some crime; but throughout the letter he never once refers to their bishop; and indeed its whole tone is hardly consistent with the supposition that they had any chief officer holding the same prominent

Later development of episcopacy.

Philippi.

[1] Tertull. *de Praescr.* 37.

position at Philippi which he himself held at Smyrna. We are thus led to the inference that episcopacy did not exist at all among the Philippians at this time, or existed only in an elementary form, so that the bishop was a mere president of the presbyteral council. At Thessalonica indeed, according to a tradition mentioned by Origen[1], the same Caius whom St Paul describes as his host at Corinth was afterwards appointed bishop; but with so common a name the possibilities of error are great, even if the testimony were earlier in date and expressed in more distinct terms. When from Macedonia we pass to Achaia, the same phenomena present themselves. At the close of the first century Clement writes to Corinth, as at the beginning of the second century Polycarp writes to Philippi. As in the latter epistle, so in the former, there is no allusion to the episcopal office: yet the main subject of Clement's letter is the expulsion and ill-treatment of certain presbyters, whose authority he maintains as holding an office instituted by and handed down from the Apostles themselves. If Corinth however was without a bishop in the strict sense at the close of the first century, she cannot long have remained so. When some fifty years later Hegesippus stayed here on his way to Rome, Primus was bishop of this Church; and it is clear moreover from this writer's language that Primus had been preceded by several occupants of the see[2]. Indeed the order of his

Thessalonica.

Corinth.

[1] On Rom. xvi. 23; 'Fertur sane traditione majorum' (iv. p. 86, ed. Delarue).

[2] In Euseb. *H. E.* iv. 22, καὶ ἐπέμενεν ἡ ἐκκλησία ἡ Κορινθίων ἐν τῷ ὀρθῷ λόγῳ μέχρι Πρίμου ἐπισκοπεύοντος ἐν Κορίνθῳ κ.τ.λ. A little later he speaks of ἑκάστη

narrative, so far as we can piece it together from the broken fragments preserved in Eusebius, might suggest the inference, not at all improbable in itself, that episcopacy had been established at Corinth as a corrective of the dissensions and feuds which had called forth Clement's letter[1]. Again Dionysius, one of the immediate successors of Primus, was the writer of several letters of which fragments are extant[2]; and at the close of the century we meet with a later bishop of Corinth, Bacchyllus, who takes an active part in the Paschal controversy[3].

When from Corinth we pass on to Athens, a very early instance of a bishop confronts us, on authority which seems at first sight good. Eusebius represents Dionysius of Corinth, who wrote apparently about the year 170, as stating that his namesake the Areopagite, 'having been brought to the faith by the Apostle Paul according to the account in the Acts, was the first to be entrusted with the bishopric (or supervision) of the diocese (in the language of those times, the parish) of the Athenians[4].' Now, if we could be sure that Eusebius was here reporting the exact words of Dionysius, the testimony though

Athens.

διαδοχή, referring apparently to Corinth among other churches.

[1] Hegesippus mentioned the feuds in the Church of Corinth during the reign of Domitian, which had occasioned the writing of this letter (*H. E.* iii. 16); and then after some account of Clement's epistle (μετά τινα περὶ τῆς Κλήμεντος πρὸς Κορινθίους ἐπιστολῆς αὐτῷ εἰρημένα, *H. E.* iv. 22) he continued in the words which are quoted in the last note (ἐπιλέγοντος ταῦτα, Καὶ ἐπέμενεν ἡ ἐκκλησία κ.τ.λ.). On the probable tenour of Hegesippus' work see below, p. 61.

[2] The fragments of Dionysius are found in Euseb. *H. E.* iv. 23. See also Routh *Rel. Sacr.* i. p. 177 sq.

[3] Euseb. *H. E.* v. 22, 23.

[4] In Euseb. *H. E.* iv. 23.

not conclusive would be entitled to great deference. In this case the easiest solution would be, that this ancient writer had not unnaturally confounded the earlier and later usage of the word bishop. But it seems not improbable that Eusebius (for he does not profess to be giving a direct quotation) has unintentionally paraphrased and interpreted the statement of Dionysius by the light of later ecclesiastical usages. However Athens, like Corinth, did not long remain without a bishop. The same Dionysius, writing to the Athenians, reminds them how, after the martyrdom of Publius their ruler (*τὸν προεστῶτα*), Quadratus becoming bishop sustained the courage and stimulated the faith of the Athenian brotherhood[1]. If, as seems more probable than not, this was the famous Quadratus who presented his apology to Hadrian during that emperor's visit to Athens, the existence of episcopacy in this city is thrown back early in the century; even though Quadratus were not already bishop when Hadrian paid his visit.

Crete. 6. The same writer, from whom we learn these particulars about episcopacy at Athens, also furnishes information on the Church in Crete. He writes letters to two different communities in this island, the one to Gortyna commending Philip who held this see, the other to the Cnossians offering words of advice to their bishop Pinytus[1]. The first was author of a treatise against Marcion[2]; the latter wrote a reply to Dionysius, of which Eusebius has preserved a brief notice[3].

[1] Euseb. *H. E.* iv. 23.

[2] Euseb. *H. E.* iv. 25.

[3] Euseb. *H. E.* v. 19. The combination of three gentile

7. Of episcopacy in THRACE, and indeed of the Thracian Church generally, we read nothing till the close of the second century, when one Ælius Publius Julius bishop of Debeltum, a colony in this province, signs an encyclical letter[1]. The existence of a see at a place so unimportant implies the wide spread of episcopacy in these regions. THRACE.

8. As we turn to ROME, we are confronted by a far more perplexing problem than any encountered hitherto. The attempt to decipher the early history of episcopacy here seems almost hopeless, where the evidence is at once scanty and conflicting. It has been often assumed that in the metropolis of the world, the seat of imperial rule, the spirit which dominated in the State must by natural predisposition and sympathy have infused itself into the Church also, so that a monarchical form of government would be developed more rapidly here than in other parts of Christendom. This supposition seems to overlook the fact that the influences which prevailed in the early church of the metropolis were more Greek than Roman[2], and that therefore the tendency would be rather towards individual liberty than towards compact and rigorous government. But indeed such presumptions, however attractive and specious, are valueless against the slightest evidence of facts. And the most trustworthy sources of information which we possess do not ROME. The prevailing spirit not monarchical.

names in 'Ælius Publius Julius' is possible at this late epoch; but, being a gross violation of Roman usage, suggests the suspicion that the signatures of three distinct persons have got confused. The error however, if error it be, does not affect the inference in the text.

[1] See preceding note.

[2] See *Philippians*, p. 20 sq.

Bearing of Clement's Epistle.

countenance the idea. The earliest authentic document bearing on the subject is the Epistle from the Romans to the Corinthians, probably written in the last decade of the first century. I have already considered the bearing of this letter on episcopacy in the Church of Corinth, and it is now time to ask what light it throws on the same institution at Rome. Now we cannot hesitate to accept the universal testimony of antiquity that it was written by Clement, the reputed bishop of Rome: and it is therefore the more surprising that, if he held this high office, the writer should not only not distinguish himself in any way from the rest of the church (as Polycarp does for instance), but that even his name should be suppressed[1]. It is still more important to observe that, though he has occasion to speak of the ministry as an institution of the Apostles, he mentions only two orders and is silent about the episcopal office. Moreover he still uses the word 'bishop' in the older sense in which it occurs in the apostolic writings, as a synonyme for presbyter[2], and it may be argued that the recognition of the episcopate as a higher and distinct office would oblige the adoption of a special name and therefore must have synchronized roughly with the separation of meaning between 'bishop' and 'presbyter.'

Testimony of Ignatius

Again, not many years after the date of Clement's letter, St Ignatius on his way to martyrdom writes to the Romans. Though this saint is the recognised champion of episcopacy, though the remaining six of the Ignatian letters all

[1] See *S. Clement of Rome*, p. 252 sq. *Appendix* [and *Apostolic Fathers*, Part I. *S. Clement of Rome*, I. p. 69 sq.].

[2] See *Philippians* p. 96 sq.

contain direct injunctions of obedience to bishops, in this epistle alone there is no allusion to the episcopal office as existing among his correspondents. The lapse of a few years carries us from the letters of Ignatius to the *Shepherd* of Hermas. And here and the indications are equivocal. Hermas receives directions in a vision to impart the revelation to the presbyters and also to make two copies, the one for Clement who shall communicate with the foreign churches (such being his duty), the other for Grapte who shall instruct the widows. Hermas himself is charged to 'read it to this city with the elders who preside over the church[1].' Elsewhere mention is made of the 'rulers' of the church[2]. And again, in an enumeration of the faithful officers of the churches past and present, he speaks of the 'apostles and bishops and teachers and deacons[3].' Here most probably the word 'bishop' is used in its later sense, and the presbyters are designated by the term 'teachers.' Yet this interpretation cannot be regarded as certain, for the 'bishops and teachers' in Hermas, like the 'pastors and teachers' in St Paul, might possibly refer to the one presbyteral office in its twofold aspect. Other passages in which Hermas uses the same terms are indecisive. Thus he speaks of 'apostles and teachers who preached to the whole world and taught with

Hermas.

[1] *Vis.* ii. 4 *γράψεις οὖν δύο βιβλιδάρια καὶ πέμψεις ἓν Κλήμεντι καὶ ἓν Γραπτῇ. πέμψει οὖν Κλήμης εἰς τὰς ἔξω πόλεις· ἐκείνῳ γὰρ ἐπιτέτραπται· Γραπτὴ δὲ νουθετήσει τὰς χήρας καὶ τοὺς ὀρφανούς· σὺ δὲ ἀναγνώσεις εἰς ταύτην τὴν πόλιν μετὰ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων τῶν προϊσταμένων τῆς ἐκκλησίας.*

[2] *Vis.* ii. 2, iii. 9.

[3] *Vis.* iii. 5.

reverence and purity the word of the Lord[1]'; of 'deacons who exercised their diaconate ill and plundered the life (*τὴν ζωήν*) of widows and orphans[2]'; of 'hospitable bishops who at all times received the servants of God into their homes cheerfully and without hypocrisy,' 'who protected the bereaved and the widows in their ministrations without ceasing[3].' From these passages it seems impossible to arrive at a safe conclusion respecting the ministry at the time when Hermas wrote. In other places he condemns the false prophet 'who, seeming to have the Spirit, exalts himself and would fain have the first seat[4]'; or he warns 'those who rule over the church and those who hold the chief-seat,' bidding them give up their dissensions and live at peace among themselves[5]; or he denounces those who have 'emulation one with another for the first place or for some honour[6].'

Unwarranted inference.

If we could accept the suggestion that in this last class of passages the writer condemns the ambition which aimed at transforming the presbyterian into the episcopal form of government[7], we should have arrived at a solution of the difficulty: but the rebukes are couched in the most general terms and apply at least as well to the ambitious pursuit of existing offices as to the arrogant assertion of a hitherto unrecognized power[8]. This clue failing

[1] *Sim.* ix. 25.

[2] *Sim.* ix. 26.

[3] *Sim.* ix. 27.

[4] *Mand.* xi.

[5] *Vis.* iii. 9 *ὑμῖν λέγω τοῖς προηγουμένοις τῆς ἐκκλησίας καὶ τοῖς πρωτοκαθεδρίταις*, κ.τ.λ. For the form *πρωτοκαθεδρίτης* see the note on *συνδιδασκαλίταις*, Ignat. *Ephes.* 3.

[6] *Sim.* viii. 7.

[7] So Ritschl pp. 403, 535.

[8] Comp. Matt. xxiii. 6, etc. When Irenæus wrote, episcopacy

us, the notices in the *Shepherd* are in themselves too vague to lead to any result. Were it not known that the writer's own brother was bishop of Rome, we should be at a loss what to say about the constitution of the Roman Church in his day[1].

But while the testimony of these early writers appears at first sight and on the whole unfavourable to the existence of episcopacy in Rome when they wrote, the impression needs to be corrected by important considerations on the other side. Hegesippus, who visited Rome about the middle of the second century during the papacy of Anicetus, has left it on record that he drew up a list of the Roman bishops to his own time[2]. As the list is not preserved[3], we can only conjecture its contents; but if we may judge from the sentence immediately following, in which he praises the orthodoxy of this and other churches under each succession, his object was probably to show that the teachings of the Apostles had been carefully preserved and handed down, and he would therefore trace the episcopal succession back to apostolic times[4]. Such at all

Testimony of Hegesippus

was certainly a venerable institution: yet his language closely resembles the reproachful expressions of Hermas: 'Contumeliis agunt reliquos et principalis consessionis (mss concessionis) tumore elati sunt' (iv. 26. 3).

[1] See *Philippians* p. 168, note 9, and *S. Clement of Rome* p. 316, *Appendix* [*Apostolic Fathers*, Part I. *S. Clement of Rome*, I. p. 359 sq.].

[2] In Euseb. *H. E.* iv. 22.

[3] [It is probably preserved in Epiphanius, see *Apostolic Fathers*, Part I. *S. Clement of Rome*, I. p. 327 sq.]

[4] The words of Hegesippus ἐν ἑκάστῃ διαδοχῇ καὶ ἐν ἑκάστῃ πόλει κ.τ.λ. have a parallel in those of Irenæus (iii. 3. 3) τῇ αὐτῇ τάξει καὶ τῇ αὐτῇ διδαχῇ (Lat. 'hac ordinatione et successione') ἥ τε ἀπὸ τῶν ἀποστόλων ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ παράδοσις καὶ

and of Irenæus.

events is the aim and method of Irenæus, who, writing somewhat later than Hegesippus and combating Gnostic heresies, appeals especially to the bishops of Rome, as depositaries of the apostolic tradition[1]. The list of Irenæus commences with Linus, whom he identifies with the person of this name mentioned by St Paul, and whom he states to have been 'entrusted with the office of the bishopric' by the Apostles. The second in succession is Anencletus of whom he relates nothing, the third Clemens whom he describes as a hearer of the Apostles and as writer of the letter to the Corinthians. The others in order are Evarestus, Alexander, Xystus, Telesphorus, Hyginus, Pius, Anicetus, Soter, and Eleutherus during whose episcopacy Irenæus writes. Eusebius in different works gives two lists, both agreeing in the order with Irenæus, though not according with each other in the dates. Catalogues are also found in writers later than Irenæus, transposing the sequence of the earliest bishops, and adding the name Cletus or substituting it for Anencletus[2]. These discrepancies

Lists of Roman bishops.

τὸ τῆς ἀληθείας κήρυγμα κατήντηκεν εἰς ἡμᾶς. May not Irenæus have derived his information from the διαδοχὴ of Roman bishops which Hegesippus drew up? See below, p. 91 [and *Apostolic Fathers*, Part I. *S. Clement of Rome*, I. pp. 63 sq., 204 sq., 327 sq.].

[1] Iren. iii. 33.

[2] On this subject see Pearson's *Dissertationes duae de serie et successione primorum Romae episcoporum* in his *Minor Theological Works* II. p. 296 sq. (ed. Churton), and especially the recent work of Lipsius, *Chronologie der römischen Bischöfe*, Kiel 1869. The earliest list which places Clement's name first belongs to the age of Hippolytus. The omission of his name in a recently discovered Syriac list (*Ancient Syriac Documents* p. 71) is doubtless due to the fact that the names Cletus,

may be explained by assuming two distinct churches in Rome—a Jewish and a Gentile community—in the first age; or they may have arisen from a confusion of the earlier and later senses of ἐπίσκοπος; or the names may have been transposed in the later lists owing to the influence of the *Clementine Homilies*, in which romance Clement is represented as the immediate disciple and successor of St Peter[1]. With the many possibilities of error, no more can safely be assumed of LINUS and ANENCLETUS than that they held some prominent position in the Roman Church. But the reason for supposing CLEMENT to have been a bishop is as strong as the universal tradition of the next ages can make it. Yet, while calling him a bishop, we need not suppose him to have attained the same distinct isolated position of authority which was occupied by his successors Eleutherus and Victor for instance at the close of the second century, or even by his contemporaries Ignatius of Antioch and Polycarp of Smyrna. He was rather the chief of the presbyters than the chief over the presbyters. Only when thus limited, can the episcopacy of St Clement be reconciled with the language of his own epistle or with the notice in his younger contemporary Hermas. At the same time the allusion in the *Shepherd*, though inconsistent with any exalted conception of

Linus, A.D. 68.
Anencletus, A.D. 80.
Clement, A.D. 92.

Clemens, begin with the same letters. In the margin I have for convenience given the dates of the Roman bishops from the Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius, without however attaching any weight to them in the case of the earlier names. See *Philippians* p. 169 [and *Apostolic Fathers*, Part I. *S. Clement of Rome*, I. p. 201 sq.].

[1] See *Dissertations on the Apostolic Age*, p. 99.

his office, does assign to him as his special province the duty of communicating with foreign churches[1], which in the early ages was essentially the bishop's function, as may be seen by the instances of Polycarp, of Dionysius, of Irenæus, and of Polycrates.

Evarestus, A.D. 100. Alexander, A.D. 109. Xystus, A.D. 119.

Of the two succeeding bishops, EVARESTUS and ALEXANDER, no authentic notices are preserved. XYSTUS, who follows, is the reputed author of a collection of proverbs, which a recent distinguished critic has not hesitated to accept as genuine[2]. He is also the earliest of those Roman prelates whom Irenæus, writing to Victor in the name of the Gallican Churches, mentions as having observed Easter after the western reckoning and yet maintained peace with those who kept it otherwise[3]. The next

Telesphorus, A.D. 128. Hyginus, A.D. 139.

two, TELESPHORUS and HYGINUS, are described in the same terms. The former is likewise distinguished as the sole martyr among the early bishops of the metropolis[4]; the latter is mentioned as being in office when the peace of the Roman Church was disturbed by the presence of the heretics Valentinus and Cerdon[5]. With PIUS, the next in order, the

Pius, A.D. 142.

office, if not the man, emerges into daylight. An anonymous writer, treating on the canon of Scripture, says that the *Shepherd* was written by Hermas 'quite lately while his brother Pius held the see of

[1] See above, p. 59, note 1.

[2] Ewald, *Gesch. des V. I.* VII. p. 321 sq. On the other hand see Zeller *Philos. der Griechen* III. 1, p. 601 note, and Sänger in the *Jüdische Zeitschrift* (1867) p. 29 sq. It has recently been edited by Gildemeister, *Sexti Sententiæ*, 1873.

[3] Iren. in Euseb. *H. E.* v. 24.

[4] Iren. iii. 3. 3. At least Irenæus mentions him alone as a martyr. Later stories confer the glory of martyrdom on others also.

[5] Iren. iii. 4. 3.

the Church of Rome[1].' This passage, written by a contemporary, besides the testimony which it bears to the date and authorship of the *Shepherd* (with which we are not here concerned), is valuable in its bearing on this investigation; for the use of the 'chair' or 'see' as a recognised phrase points to a more or less prolonged existence of episcopacy in Rome, when this writer lived. To Pius succeeds ANICETUS. And now Rome becomes for the moment the centre of interest and activity in the Christian world[2]. During this episcopate Hegesippus, visiting the metropolis for the purpose of ascertaining and recording the doctrines of the Roman Church, is welcomed by the bishop[3]. About the same time also another more illustrious visitor, Polycarp the venerable bishop of Smyrna, arrives in Rome to confer with the head of the Roman Church on the Paschal dispute[4] and there falls in with and denounces the heretic Marcion[5]. These facts are stated on contemporary authority. Of SOTER also, the next in succession, a contemporary record is preserved. Dionysius of Corinth, writing to the Romans, praises the zeal of their bishop, who in his fatherly care for the suffering poor and for the prisoners working in the mines had maintained and extended the hereditary fame of his church for zeal in all charitable and good works[6]. In ELEUTHERUS, who succeeds Soter, we have the earliest recorded instance

Anicetus, A.D. 157.

Soter, A.D. 168.

Eleutherus, A.D. 177.

[1] See *Philippians* p. 168, note 9, where the passage is quoted.

[2] See Westcott *Canon* p. 191, ed. 4.

[3] Hegesipp. in Euseb. *H. E.* iv. 22.

[4] Iren. in Euseb. *H. E.* v. 24.

[5] Iren. iii. 3. 4; comp. iii. 4. 4.

[6] In Euseb. *H. E.* iv. 23.

of an archdeacon. When Hegesippus paid his visit to the metropolis, he found Eleutherus standing in this relation to the bishop Anicetus, and seems to have made his acquaintance while acting in this capacity[1]. Eleutherus however was a contemporary, not only of Hegesippus, but also of the great writers Irenæus and Tertullian[2], who speak of the episcopal succession in the churches generally, and in Rome especially, as the best safeguard for the transmission of the true faith from apostolic times[3].

Victor, A.D. 189.

With VICTOR, the successor of Eleutherus, a new era begins. Apparently the first Latin prelate who held the metropolitan see of Latin Christendom[4], he was moreover the first Roman bishop who is

[1] In Euseb. *H. E.* iv. 22 *μέχρις Ἀνικήτου οὗ διάκονος ἦν Ἐλεύθερος.*

[2] He is mentioned by Irenæus iii. 3. 3 *νῦν δωδεκάτῳ τόπῳ τὸν τῆς ἐπισκοπῆς ἀπὸ τῶν ἀποστόλων κατέχει κλῆρον Ἐλεύθερος*, and by Tertullian, *Praescr.* 30 'sub episcopatu Eleutheri benedicti.'

[3] Iren. iii. 3. 2, Tertull. *de Praescr.* 32, 36, *adv. Marc.* iv. 5.

[4] All the predecessors of Victor bear Greek names with two exceptions, Clemens and Pius; and even these appear not to have been Latin. Clement writes in Greek, and his style is wholly unlike what might be expected from a Roman. Hermas, the brother of Pius, not only employs the Greek language in writing, but bears a Greek name also. It is worth observing also that Tertullian (*de Praescr.* 30), speaking of the episcopate of Eleutherus, designates the church of the metropolis not 'ecclesia Romana,' but 'ecclesia Romanensis,' i.e. not the Church *of* Rome, but the Church *in* Rome. The transition from a Greek to a Latin Church was of course gradual; but, if a definite epoch must be named, the episcopate of Victor serves better than any other. The two immediate successors of Victor, Zephyrinus (202—219) and Callistus (219—223), bear Greek names, and it may be inferred from the account in Hippolytus that they were Greeks; but from this time forward the Roman bishops, with scarcely an exception, seem to have been Latins.

known to have had intimate relations with the imperial court[1], and the first also who advanced those claims to universal dominion which his successors in later ages have always consistently and often successfully maintained[2]. 'I hear,' writes Tertullian scornfully, 'that an edict has gone forth, aye and that a peremptory edict; the chief pontiff, forsooth, I mean the bishop of bishops, has issued his commands[3].' At the end of the first century the Roman Church was swayed by the mild and peaceful counsels of the presbyter-bishop Clement; the close of the second witnessed the autocratic pretensions of the haughty pope Victor, the prototype of a Hildebrand or an Innocent.

9. The Churches of GAUL were closely connected with and probably descended from the Churches of Asia Minor. If so, the episcopal form of government would probably be coeval with the foundation of Christian brotherhoods in this country. It is true we do not meet with any earlier bishop than the immediate predecessor of Irenæus at Lyons, the aged Pothinus, of whose martyrdom an account is given in the letter of the Gallican Churches[4]. But GAUL.

[1] Hippol. *Haer.* ix. 12, pp. 287, 288.

[2] See the account of his attitude in the Paschal controversy, Euseb. *H. E.* v. 24.

[3] Tertull. *de Pudic.* 1. The bishop here mentioned will be either Victor or Zephyrinus; and the passage points to the assumption of extraordinary titles by the Roman bishops about this time. See also Cyprian in the opening of the *Concil. Carth.* p. 158 (ed. Fell) 'neque enim quisquam nostrum episcopum se episcoporum constituit etc.,' doubtless in allusion to the arrogance of the Roman prelates.

[4] The Epistle of the Gallican Churches in Euseb. *H. E.* v. 1.

this is also the first distinct historical notice of any kind relating to Christianity in Gaul.

Africa.

10. Africa again was evangelized from Rome at a comparatively late date. Of the African Church before the close of the second century, when a flood of light is suddenly thrown upon it by the writings of Tertullian, we know absolutely nothing. But we need not doubt that this father represents the traditions and sentiments of his church, when he lays stress on episcopacy as an apostolic institution and on the episcopate as the depositary of pure Christian doctrine. If we may judge by the large number of prelates assembled in the African councils of a later generation, it would appear that the extension of the episcopate was far more rapid here than in most parts of Christendom[1].

Alexandria.

11. The Church of Alexandria, on the other hand, was probably founded in apostolic times[2]. Nor

[1] At the African council convoked by Cyprian about 50 years later, the opinions of as many as 87 bishops are recorded; and allusion is made in one of his letters (*Epist.* 59) to a council held before his time, when 90 bishops assembled. For a list of the African bishoprics at this time see Münter *Primord. Eccl. Afric.* p. 31 sq. The enormous number of African bishops a few centuries later would seem incredible, were it not reported on the best authority. Dupin (Optat. Milev. p. lix) counts up as many as 690 African sees: compare also the Notitia in Ruinart's Victor Vitensis p. 117 sq., with the notes p. 215 sq. These last references I owe to Gibbon, c. xxxvii. and c. xli.

[2] Independently of the tradition relating to St Mark, this may be inferred from extant canonical and uncanonical writings which appear to have emanated from Alexandria. The Epistle to the Hebrews, even if we may not ascribe it to the learned Alexandrian Apollos (Acts xviii. 24), at least bears obvious marks of Alexandrian culture. The so-called Epistle of Barnabas again, which may have been written as early as

is there any reason to doubt the tradition which connects it with the name of St Mark, though the authorities for the statement are comparatively recent. Nevertheless of its early history we have no authentic record. Eusebius indeed gives a list of bishops beginning with St Mark, which here, as in the case of the Roman see, is accompanied by dates[1]; but from what source he derived his information is unknown. The first contemporary notice of church officers in Alexandria is found in a heathen writer. The emperor Hadrian, writing to the consul Servianus, thus describes the state of religion in this city: 'I have become perfectly familiar with Egypt, which you praised to me: it is fickle, uncertain, blown about by every gust of rumour. Those who worship Serapis are Christians, and those are devoted to Serapis who call themselves bishops of Christ. There is no ruler of a synagogue there, no Samaritan, no Christian presbyter, who is not an astrologer, a soothsayer, a quack. The patriarch himself whenever he comes to Egypt is compelled by some to worship Serapis, by others to worship Christ[2].' In

Hadrian's letter.

the reign of Vespasian and can hardly date later than Nerva, must be referred to the Alexandrian school of theology.

[1] Euseb. *H. E.* ii. 24, iii. 14, etc. See Clinton's *Fasti Romani* II. p. 544.

[2] Preserved in Vopiscus *Vit. Saturn.* 8. The Jewish patriarch (who resided at Tiberias) is doubtless intended; for it would be no hardship to the Christian bishop of Alexandria to be 'compelled to worship Christ.' Otherwise the anachronism involved in such a title would alone have sufficed to condemn the letter as spurious. Yet Salmasius, Casaubon, and the older commentators generally, agree in the supposition that the bishop of Alexandria is styled patriarch here. The manner in which the document is stated by Vopiscus to have been preserved ('Hadriani

this letter, which seems to have been written in the year 134, Hadrian shows more knowledge of Jewish ecclesiastical polity than of Christian: but, apparently without knowing the exact value of terms, he seems to distinguish the bishop and the presbyter in the Christian community[1]. From the age of Hadrian to the age of Clement no contemporary or nearly contemporary notices are found, bearing on the government of the Alexandrian Church. The language of Clement is significant; he speaks sometimes of two orders of the ministry, the presbyters and deacons[2]; sometimes of three, the bishops, pres-

Clement of Alexandria.

epistolam ex libris Phlegontis liberti ejus proditam') is favourable to its genuineness; nor does the mention of Verus as the emperor's 'son' in another part of the letter present any real chronological difficulty. Hadrian paid his visit to Egypt in the autumn of 130, but the letter is not stated to have been written there. The date of the third consulship of Servianus is A.D. 134, and the account of Spartianus (*Ver.* 3) easily admits of the adoption of Verus before or during this year, though Clinton (*Fast. Rom.* I. p. 124) places it as late as A.D. 135. Gregorovius (*Kaiser Hadrian* p. 71) suggests that 'filium meum' may have been added by Phlegon or by some one else. The prominence of the Christians in this letter is not surprising when we remember how Hadrian interested himself in their tenets on another occasion (at Athens). This document is considered genuine by such opposite authorities as Tillemont (*Hist. des Emp.* II. p. 265) and Gregorovius (l. c. p. 41), and may be accepted without hesitation.

[1] At this time there appears to have been only one bishop in Egypt (see below, p. 80). But Hadrian, who would have heard of numerous bishops elsewhere, and perhaps had no very precise knowledge of the Egyptian Church, might well indulge in this rhetorical flourish. At all events he seems to mean different offices when speaking of the bishop and the presbyter.

[2] *Strom.* vii. 1 (p. 830, Potter) *ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ κατὰ τὴν ἐκκλησίαν, τὴν μὲν βελτιωτικὴν οἱ πρεσβύτεροι σώζουσιν εἰκόνα, τὴν ὑπηρετικὴν δὲ οἱ διάκονοι.*

byters, and deacons[1]. Thus it would appear that even as late as the close of the second century the bishop of Alexandria was regarded as distinct and yet not distinct from the presbytery[2]. And the language of Clement is further illustrated by the fact, which will have to be considered at length presently, that at Alexandria the bishop was nominated and apparently ordained by the twelve presbyters out of their own number[3]. The episcopal office in this Church during the second century gives no presage of the world-wide influence to which under the prouder name of patriarchate it was destined in later ages to attain. The Alexandrian succession, in which history is hitherto most interested, is not the succession of the bishops but of the heads of the catechetical school. The first bishop of Alexandria, of whom any distinct incident is recorded on trustworthy authority, was a contemporary of Origen.

Inferences.

The notices thus collected[4] present a large body

[1] *Strom.* vi. 13 (p. 793) *αἱ ἐνταῦθα κατὰ τὴν ἐκκλησίαν προκοπαί, ἐπισκόπων, πρεσβυτέρων, διακόνων, μιμήματα οἷμαι ἀγγελικῆς δόξης*, *Strom.* iii. 12 (p. 552), *Paed.* iii. 12 (see the next note): see Kaye's *Clement of Alexandria* p. 463 sq.

[2] Yet in one passage he, like Irenæus (see *Philippians* p. 98), betrays his ignorance that in the language of the New Testament bishop and presbyter are synonymes; see *Paed.* iii. 12 (p. 309) *μυρίαι δὲ ὅσαι ὑποθῆκαι εἰς πρόσωπα ἐκλεκτὰ διατείνουσαι ἐγγεγράφαται ταῖς βίβλοις ταῖς ἁγίαις, αἱ μὲν πρεσβυτέροις αἱ δὲ ἐπισκόποις αἱ δὲ διακόνοις, ἄλλαι χήραις κ.τ.λ.*

[3] See below, p. 77.

[4] In this sketch of the episcopate in the different churches I have not thought it necessary to carry the lists later than the second century. Nor (except in a very few cases) has any testimony been accepted, unless the writer himself flourished before the close of this century. The Apostolic Constitutions would add several names to the

The general prevalence of episcopacy.

of evidence establishing the fact of the early and extensive adoption of episcopacy in the Christian Church. The investigation however would not be complete, unless attention were called to such indirect testimony as is furnished by the tacit assumptions of writers living towards and at the close of the second century. Episcopacy is so inseparably interwoven with all the traditions and beliefs of men like Irenæus and Tertullian, that they betray no knowledge of a time when it was not. Even Irenæus, the earlier of these, who was certainly born and probably grown up before the middle of the century, seems to be wholly ignorant that the word bishop had passed from a lower to a higher value since the apostolic times[1]. Nor is it important only to observe the positive though indirect testimony which they afford. Their silence suggests a strong negative presumption, that while every other point of doctrine or practice was eagerly canvassed, the form of Church government alone scarcely came under discussion.

Gradual and uneven development of the office.

But these notices, besides establishing the general prevalence of episcopacy, also throw considerable light on its origin. They indicate that the solution suggested by the history of the word 'bishop' and its transference from the lower to the higher office is the true solution, and that the episcopate was created out of the presbytery. They shew that this creation was not so much an isolated act as a progres-

list; but this evidence is not trustworthy, though in many cases the statements doubtless rested on some traditional basis.

[1] See *Philippians* p. 98. The same is true of Clement of Alexandria: see above, p. 71, note 2.

sive development, not advancing everywhere at an uniform rate but exhibiting at one and the same time different stages of growth in different churches. They seem to hint also that, so far as this development was affected at all by national temper and characteristics, it was slower where the prevailing influences were more purely Greek, as at Corinth and Philippi and Rome, and more rapid where an oriental spirit predominated, as at Jerusalem and Antioch and Ephesus. Above all, they establish this result clearly, that its maturer forms are seen first in those regions where the latest surviving Apostles (more especially St John) fixed their abode, and at a time when its prevalence cannot be dissociated from their influence or their sanction.

Original relation of the two offices not forgotten.

The original relation of the bishop to the presbyter, which this investigation reveals, was not forgotten even after the lapse of centuries. Though set over the presbyters, he was still regarded as in some sense one of them. Irenæus indicates this position of the episcopate very clearly. In his language a presbyter is never designated a bishop, while on the other hand he very frequently speaks of a bishop as a presbyter. In other words, though he views the episcopate as a distinct office from the presbytery, he does not regard it as a distinct order in the same sense in which the diaconate is a distinct order. Thus, arguing against the heretics he says, 'But when again we appeal against them to that tradition which is derived from the Apostles, which is preserved in the churches by successions of *presbyters*, they place themselves in opposition to it, saying that they, being wiser not only than the

A bishop still called a presbyter by Irenæus

presbyters but even than the Apostles, have discovered the genuine truth[1].' Yet just below, after again mentioning the apostolic tradition, he adds, 'We are able to enumerate those who have been appointed by the Apostles *bishops* in the churches and their successors down to our own time[2]'; and still further, after saying that it would take up too much space if he were to trace the succession in all the churches, he declares that he will confound his opponents by singling out the ancient and renowned Church of Rome founded by the Apostles Peter and Paul and will point out the tradition handed down to his own time 'by the succession of *bishops*,' after which he gives a list from Linus to Eleutherus[3]. So again in another passage he writes, 'Therefore obedience ought to be rendered to the *presbyters* who are in the churches, who have the succession from the Apostles as we have shown, who with the succession of the *episcopate* have also received the sure grace of truth according to the pleasure of the Father'; after which he mentions some 'who are believed by many to be *presbyters*, but serve their own lusts and are elated with the pomp of the *chief seat*,' and bids his readers shun these and seek such as 'together with the rank of the *presbytery* show their speech sound and their conversation void of offence,' adding of these latter, 'Such *presbyters* the Church nurtures and rears, concerning whom also the prophet saith, "I will give thy rulers in peace and thy *bishops* in righteousness[4]".' Thus also writing to Victor of Rome in the name of the Galli-

[1] Iren. iii. 2. 2.
[2] Iren. iii. 3. 1.
[3] Iren. iii. 3. 2, 3.
[4] Iren. iv. 26. 2, 3, 4, 5.

can churches, he says, 'It was not so observed by the *presbyters* before Soter, who ruled the Church which thou now guidest, we mean Anicetus and Pius, Hyginus and Telesphorus and Xystus[1].' And the same estimate of the office appears in Clement of Alexandria: for, while he speaks elsewhere of the three offices in the ministry, mentioning them by name, he in one passage puts forward a twofold division, the presbyters whose duty it is to *improve*, and the deacons whose duty it is to *serve*, the Church[2]. The functions of the bishop and presbyter are thus regarded as substantially the same in kind, though different in degree, while the functions of the diaconate are separate from both. More than a century and a half later, this view is put forward with the greatest distinctness by the most learned and most illustrious of the Latin fathers. 'There is one ordination,' writes the commentator Hilary, 'of the bishop and the presbyter; for either is a priest,

and Clement of Alexandria.

Testimony of Ambrosiaster,

[1] In Eus. *H. E.* v. 24. In other places Irenæus apparently uses πρεσβύτεροι to denote antiquity and not office, as in the letter to Florinus, Euseb. *H. E.* v. 20 οἱ πρὸ ἡμῶν πρεσβύτεροι οἱ καὶ τοῖς ἀποστόλοις συμφοιτήσαντες (comp. ii. 22. 5); in which sense the word occurs also in Papias (Euseb. *H. E.* iii. 39; see *Contemporary Review*, Aug. 1875, p. 379 sq. [*Essays on Supernatural Religion* p. 143 sq.]); but the passages quoted in the text are decisive, nor is there any reason (as Rothe assumes, p. 414 sq.) why the usage of Irenæus should throughout be uniform in this matter.

[2] See the passage quoted above, p. 70, note 2. So also in the anecdote of St John (*Quis div. salv.* 42, p. 959) we read τῷ καθεστῶτι προσβλέψας ἐπισκόπῳ, but immediately afterwards ὁ δὲ πρεσβύτερος ἀναλαβών κ.τ.λ., and then again ἄγε δή, ἔφη, ὦ ἐπίσκοπε, of the same person. Thus he too, like Irenæus, regards the bishop as a presbyter, though the converse would not be true.

but the bishop is first. Every bishop is a presbyter, but every presbyter is not a bishop: for he is bishop who is first among the presbyters[1].' The language of St Jerome to the same effect has been quoted elsewhere[2]. To the passages there given may be added the following: 'This has been said to show that with the ancients presbyters were the same as bishops: but gradually all the responsibility was deferred to a single person, that the thickets of heresies might be rooted out. Therefore, as presbyters know that by *the custom of the Church* they are subject to him who shall have been set over them, so let bishops also be aware that they are superior to presbyters *more owing to custom than to any actual ordinance of the Lord*, etc.: Let us see therefore what sort of person ought to be ordained presbyter or bishop[3].' In the same spirit too the great Augustine writing to Jerome says, 'Although according to titles of honour which *the practice of the Church has now made valid*, the episcopate is greater than the presbytery, yet in many things Augustine is less than Jerome[4].' To these fathers this view seemed to be an obvious deduction from the identity of the terms 'bishop' and 'presbyter' in the apostolic writings; nor indeed, when they wrote, had usage entirely effaced the original connexion between the two offices. Even in the fourth and fifth centuries, when the independence and power of the episcopate had reached its maximum, it was still customary for a bishop in writing to a

Jerome,

and Augustine.

Bishops styled themselves fellow-presbyters.

[1] Ambrosiast. on 1 Tim. iii. 10.

[2] See *Philippians* p. 98.

[3] On Tit. i. 5 (VII. p. 696).

[4] *Epist.* lxxxii. 33 (II. p. 202, ed. Ben.).

presbyter to address him as 'fellow-presbyter[1],' thus bearing testimony to a substantial identity of order. Nor does it appear that this view was ever questioned until the era of the Reformation. In the western Church at all events it carried the sanction of the highest ecclesiastical authorities and was maintained even by popes and councils[2].

The bishop of Alexandria chosen and created by the presbytery.

Nor was it only in the *language* of the later Church that the memory of this fact was preserved. Even in her practice indications might here and there be traced, which pointed to a time when the bishop was still only the chief member of the presbytery. The case of the Alexandrian Church, which has already been mentioned casually, deserves special notice. St Jerome, after denouncing the audacity of certain persons who 'would give to deacons the precedence over presbyters, that is over bishops,' and alleging scriptural proofs of the identity of the two, gives the following fact in illustration: 'At Alexandria, from Mark the Evangelist down to the times of the bishops Heraclas (A.D. 233—249) and

[1] So for instance Cyprian, *Epist.* 14, writes 'compresbyteri nostri Donatus et Fortunatus'; and addressing Cornelius bishop of Rome (*Epist.* 45) he says 'cum ad me talia de te et compresbyteris tecum considentibus scripta venissent.' Compare also *Epist.* 44, 45, 71, 76. Augustine writes to Jerome in the same terms, and in fact this seems to have been the recognised form of address. See the *Quaest. Vet. et Nov. Test.* ci. (in Augustin. *Op.* III. P. 2, p. 93) 'Quid est enim episcopus nisi primus presbyter, hoc est summus sacerdos? Denique non aliter quam compresbyteros hic vocat et consacerdotes suos. Numquid et ministros condiaconos suos dicit episcopus?', where the writer is arguing against the arrogance of the Roman deacons. See *Philippians* p. 96.

[2] See the references collected by Gieseler, I. p. 105 sq.

Dionysius (A.D. 249—265), the presbyters always nominated as bishop one chosen out of their own body and placed in a higher grade: just as if an army were to appoint a general, or deacons were to choose from their own body one whom they knew to be diligent and call him archdeacon[1]. Though the direct statement of this father refers only to the *appointment* of the bishop, still it may be inferred that the function of the presbyters extended also to the *consecration*. And this inference is borne out by other evidence. 'In Egypt,' writes an older contemporary of St Jerome, the commentator Hilary, 'the presbyters seal (i.e. ordain or consecrate), if the bishop be not present[2].' This however might refer only to the ordination of presbyters, and not to the consecration of a bishop. But even the latter is supported by direct evidence, which though comparatively late deserves consideration, inasmuch as it comes from one who was himself a patriarch of Alexandria. Eutychius, who held the patriarchal see from A.D. 933 to A.D. 940, writes as follows: 'The Evangelist Mark appointed along with the patriarch Hananias twelve presbyters who should remain with the patriarch, to the end that, when the patriarchate was vacant, they might choose one of the twelve presbyters, on whose head the remaining eleven laying their hands should bless him and create him patriarch.' The vacant place in the

Testimony of Eutychius.

[1] *Epist.* cxlvi. *ad Evang.* (I. p. 1082).

[2] Ambrosiast. on Ephes. iv. 12. So too in the *Quaest. Vet. et Nov. Test.* ci. (falsely ascribed to St Augustine), August. *Op.* III. P. 2, p. 93, 'Nam in Alexandria et per totam Ægyptum, si desit episcopus, consecrat (v. l. consignat) presbyter.'

presbytery was then to be filled up, that the number twelve might be constant[1]. 'This custom,' adds this writer, 'did not cease till the time of Alexander (A.D. 313—326), patriarch of Alexandria. He however forbad that henceforth the presbyters should create the patriarch, and decreed that on the death of the patriarch the bishops should meet to ordain the (new) patriarch, etc.[2]' It is clear from this passage that Eutychius considered the functions of nomination and ordination to rest with the same persons.

If this view however be correct, the practice of the Alexandrian Church was exceptional; for at this

[1] Eutychii Patr. Alexandr. *Annales* I. p. 331 (Pococke, Oxon. 1656). The inferences in the text are resisted by Abraham Ecchellensis *Eutychius vindicatus* p. 22 sq. (in answer to Selden the translator of Eutychius), and by Le Quien *Oriens Christianus* II. p. 342, who urge all that can be said on the opposite side. The authority of a writer so inaccurate as Eutychius, if it had been unsupported, would have had no weight; but, as we have seen, this is not the case.

[2] Between Dionysius and Alexander four bishops of Alexandria intervene, Maximus (A.D. 265), Theonas (A.D. 283), Peter I. (A.D. 301), and Achillas (A.D. 312). It will therefore be seen that there is a considerable discrepancy between the accounts of Jerome and Eutychius as to the time when the change was effected. But we may reasonably conjecture (with Ritschl, p. 432) that the transition from the old state of things to the new would be the result of a prolonged conflict between the Alexandrian presbytery who had hitherto held these functions, and the bishops of the recently created Egyptian sees to whom it was proposed to transfer them.

Somewhat later one Ischyras was deprived of his orders by an Alexandrian synod, because he had been ordained by a presbyter only: Athan. *Apol. c. Arian.* 75 (I. p. 152). From this time at all events the Alexandrian Church insisted as strictly as any other on episcopal ordination.

time the formal act of the bishop was considered generally necessary to give validity to ordination. Nor is the exception difficult to account for. At the close of the second century, when every considerable church in Europe and Asia appears to have had its bishop, the only representative of the episcopal order in Egypt was the bishop of Alexandria. It was Demetrius first (A.D. 190—233), as Eutychius informs us[1], who appointed three other bishops, to which number his successor Heraclas (A.D. 233—249) added twenty more. This extension of episcopacy to the provincial towns of Egypt paved the way for a change in the mode of appointing and ordaining the patriarch of Alexandria. But before this time it was a matter of convenience and almost of necessity that the Alexandrian presbyters should themselves ordain their chief.

Increase of the Egyptian episcopate.

Nor is it only in Alexandria that we meet with this peculiarity. Where the same urgent reason existed, the same exceptional practice seems to have been tolerated. A decree of the Council of Ancyra (A.D. 314) ordains that 'it be not allowed to country-bishops (*χωρεπισκόποις*) to ordain presbyters or deacons, nor even to city-presbyters, except permission be given in each parish by the bishop in writing[2].'

Decree of the Council of Ancyra.

[1] Eutych. *Ann.* l. c. p. 332. Heraclas, we are informed on the same authority (p. 335), was the first Alexandrian prelate who bore the title of patriarch; this designation being equivalent to metropolitan or bishop of bishops.

[2] *Concil. Ancyr.* can. 13 (Routh *Rel. Sacr.* IV. p. 121) *χωρεπισκόποις μὴ ἐξεῖναι πρεσβυτέρους ἢ διακόνους χειροτονεῖν, ἀλλὰ [μὴν] μηδὲ πρεσβυτέροις πόλεως χωρὶς τοῦ ἐπιτραπῆναι ὑπὸ τοῦ ἐπισκόπου μετὰ γραμμάτων ἐν ἑκάστῃ παροικίᾳ.* The various readings and interpretations of this canon will be found in Routh's note,

Thus while restraining the existing license, the framers of the decree still allow very considerable latitude. And it is especially important to observe that they lay more stress on episcopal sanction than on episcopal ordination. Provided that the former

p. 144 sq. Routh himself reads ἀλλὰ μὴν μηδὲ πρεσβυτέρους πόλεως, making πρεσβυτέρους πόλεως the object of χειροτονεῖν, but to this there is a twofold objection: (1) he necessarily understands the former πρεσβυτέρους to mean πρεσβυτέρους χώρας, though this is not expressed: (2) he interprets ἀλλὰ μὴν μηδὲ 'much less,' a sense which μηδέ seems to exclude and which is not borne out by his examples.

The name and office of the χωρεπίσκοπος appear to be reliques of the time when ἐπίσκοπος and πρεσβύτερος were synonymes. While the large cities had their college of presbyters, for the villages a single πρεσβύτερος (or ἐπίσκοπος) would suffice; but from his isolated position he would be tempted, even if he were not obliged, to perform on his own responsibility certain acts which in the city would only be performed by the bishop properly so called, or at least would not be performed without his consent. Out of this position the office of the later χωρεπίσκοπος would gradually be developed; but the rate of progression would not be uniform, and the regulations affecting it would be determined by the circumstances of the particular locality. Hence, at a later date, it seems in some places to have been presbyteral, in others episcopal. In the Ancyran canon just quoted a chorepiscopus is evidently placed below the city presbytery; but in other notices he occupies a higher position. For the conflicting accounts of the χωρεπίσκοπος see Bingham II. xiv.

Baur's account of the origin of the episcopate supposes that each Christian congregation was presided over, not by a college of presbyters, but by a single πρεσβύτερος or ἐπίσκοπος, i.e. that the constitution of the Church was from the first monarchical: see *Pastoralbriefe* p. 81 sq., *Ursprung des Episcopats* p. 84 sq. This view is inconsistent alike with the analogy of the synagogue and with the notices in the apostolic and early ecclesiastical writings. But the practice which he considers to have been the general rule would probably hold in small country congregations, where a college of presbyters would be unnecessary as well as impossible.

is secured, they are content to dispense with the latter.

Ordination confined to the bishops.

As a general rule however, even those writers who maintain a substantial identity in the offices of the bishop and presbyter reserve the power of ordaining to the former[1]. This distinction in fact may be regarded as a settled maxim of Church polity in the fourth and later centuries. And when Aerius maintained the equality of the bishop and presbyter and denied the necessity of episcopal ordination, his opinion was condemned as heretical, and is stigmatized as 'frantic' by Epiphanius[2].

It has been seen that the institution of an episcopate must be placed as far back as the closing years of the first century, and that it cannot, without violence to historical testimony, be dissevered from the name of St John. But it has been seen also that the earliest bishops did not hold the same independent position of supremacy which was and is occupied by their later representatives. It will therefore be instructive to trace the successive stages by which the power of the office was developed during the second and third centuries. Though something must be attributed to the frailty of human

Causes of the development of episcopacy.

[1] St Jerome himself (*Epist.* cxlvi.), in the context of the passage in which he maintains the identity of the two orders and alleges the tradition of the Alexandrian Church (see above, p. 77), adds, 'Quid enim facit *excepta ordinatione* episcopus quod presbyter non faciat?' So also *Const. Apost.* viii. 28 *ἐπίσκοπος χειροθετεῖ χειροτονεῖ... πρεσβύτερος χειροθετεῖ οὐ χειροτονεῖ*, Chrysost. *Hom.* xi. on 1 Tim. iii. 8 *τῇ χειροτονίᾳ μόνῃ ὑπερβεβήκασι καὶ τούτῳ μόνον δοκοῦσι πλεονεκτεῖν πρεσβυτέρους*. See Bingham II. iii. 5, 6, 7, for other references.

[2] *Haer.* lxxv. 3; comp. Augustine *Haer.* § 53. See Wordsworth *Theoph. Angl.* c. x.

pride and love of power, it will nevertheless appear that the pressing needs of the Church were mainly instrumental in bringing about the result, and that this development of the episcopal office was a providential safeguard amid the confusion of speculative opinion, the distracting effects of persecution, and the growing anarchy of social life, which threatened not only the extension but the very existence of the Church of Christ. Ambition of office in a society where prominence of rank involved prominence of risk was at least no vulgar and selfish passion.

Three names connected with its progress.

This development will be conveniently connected with three great names, each separated from the other by an interval of more than half a century, and each marking a distinct stage in its progress. Ignatius, Irenæus, and Cyprian, represent three successive advances towards the supremacy which was ultimately attained.

1. Ignatius.

1. Ignatius of Antioch is commonly recognized as the staunchest advocate of episcopacy in the early ages. Even, though we should refuse to accept as genuine any portions which are not contained in the Syriac Version[1], this view would nevertheless be amply justified. Confining our attention for the moment to the Syriac letters we find that to this father the chief value of episcopacy lies in the fact

The Syriac Version.

[1] In the earlier editions of this work I assumed that the Syriac Version published by Cureton represented the Epistles of Ignatius in their original form. I am now convinced that this is only an abridgment and that the shorter Greek form is genuine; but for the sake of argument I have kept the two apart in the text. I hope before long to give reasons for this change of opinion in my edition of this father. [See p. 145 sq., *Additional Note C.*]

The bishop regarded as a *centre of unity.*

that it constitutes a visible *centre of unity* in the congregation. He seems in the development of the office to keep in view the same purpose which we may suppose to have influenced the last surviving Apostles in its institution. The withdrawal of the authoritative preachers of the Gospel, the personal disciples of the Lord, had severed one bond of union. The destruction of the original abode of Christendom, the scene of the life and passion of the Saviour and of the earliest triumphs of the Church, had removed another. Thus deprived at once of the personal and the local ties which had hitherto bound individual to individual and church to church, the Christian brotherhood was threatened with schism, disunion, dissolution. 'Vindicate thine office with all diligence,' writes Ignatius to the bishop of Smyrna, 'in things temporal as well as spiritual. Have a care of unity, than which nothing is better[1].' 'The crisis requires thee, as the pilot requires the winds or the storm-tossed mariner a haven, so as to attain unto God[2].' 'Let not those who seem to be plausible and teach falsehoods dismay thee; but stand thou firm as an anvil under the hammer: 'tis the part of a great athlete to be bruised and to conquer[3].' 'Let nothing be done without thy consent, and do thou nothing without the consent of God[4].' He adds directions also, that those who decide on a life of virginity shall disclose their intention to the bishop only, and those who marry shall obtain his consent to their union, that 'their marriage may be according

[1] *Polyc.* 1.
[2] *Polyc.* 2.
[3] *Polyc.* 3.
[4] *Polyc.* 4.

to the Lord and not according to lust[1].' And turning from the bishop to the people he adds, 'Give heed to your bishop, that God also may give heed to you. I give my life for those who are obedient to the bishop, to presbyters, to deacons. With them may I have my portion in the presence of God[2].' Writing to the Ephesians also he says that in receiving their bishop Onesimus he is receiving their whole body, and he charges them to love him, and one and all to be in his likeness[3], adding, 'Since love does not permit me to be silent, therefore I have been forward in exhorting you to conform to the will of God[4].'

From these passages it will be seen that St Ignatius values the episcopate chiefly as a security for good discipline and harmonious working in the Church. And, when we pass from the Syriac letters to the Short Greek, the standing ground is still unchanged. At the same time, though the point of view is unaltered, the Greek letters contain far stronger expressions than are found in the Syriac. Throughout the whole range of Christian literature, no more uncompromising advocacy of the episcopate can be found than appears in these writings. This championship indeed is extended to the two lower orders of the ministry[5], more especially to the presbyters[6]. But it is when asserting the claims of the episcopal office to obedience and respect, that the language is strained to the utmost. 'The bishops established in

The Greek letters.

Their extravagant exaltation of the episcopate.

[1] *Polyc.* 5.
[2] *Polyc.* 6.
[3] *Ephes.* 1.
[4] *Ephes.* 3.
[5] *Magn.* 13, *Trall.* 3, 7, *Philad.* 4, 7, *Smyrn.* 8, 12.
[6] *Ephes.* 2, 20, *Magn.* 2, 6, *Trall.* 13.

the farthest parts of the world are in the counsels of Jesus Christ[1].' 'Every one whom the Master of the house sendeth to govern His own household we ought to receive, as Him that sent him; clearly therefore we ought to regard the bishop as the Lord Himself[2].' Those 'live a life after Christ,' who 'obey the bishop as Jesus Christ[3].' 'It is good to know God and the bishop; he that honoureth the bishop is honoured of God; he that doeth anything without the knowledge of the bishop serveth the devil[4].' He that obeys his bishop, obeys 'not him, but the Father of Jesus Christ, the Bishop of all.' On the other hand, he that practises hypocrisy towards his bishop, 'not only deceiveth the visible one, but cheateth the Unseen[5].' 'As many as are of God and of Jesus Christ, are with the bishop[6].' Those are approved who are 'inseparate [from God], from Jesus Christ, and from the bishop, and from the ordinances of the Apostles[7].' 'Do ye all,' says this writer again, 'follow the bishop, as Jesus Christ followed the Father[8].' The Ephesians are commended accordingly, because they are so united with their bishop 'as the Church with Jesus Christ and as Jesus Christ with the Father.' 'If,' it is added, 'the prayer of one or two hath so much power, how much more the prayer of the bishop and of the whole Church[9].' 'Wherever the bishop may appear, there let the multitude be, just as where Jesus Christ may be,

[1] *Ephes.* 3.
[2] *Ephes.* 6.
[3] *Trall.* 2.
[4] *Smyrn.* 9. *Magn.* 3.
[6] *Philad.* 3.
[7] *Trall.* 7.
[8] *Smyrn.* 8, comp. *Magn.* 7.
[9] *Ephes.* 5.

there is the universal Church[1].' Therefore 'let no man do anything pertaining to the Church without the bishop[2].' 'It is not allowable either to baptize or to hold a love-feast without the bishop: but whatsoever he may approve, this also is well pleasing to God, that everything which is done may be safe and valid[3].' 'Unity of God,' according to this writer, consists in harmonious co-operation with the bishop[4].

The presbytery however not forgotten.

And yet with all this extravagant exaltation of the episcopal office, the presbyters are not put out of sight. They form a council[5], a 'worthy spiritual coronal[6]' round the bishop. It is the duty of every individual, but especially of them, 'to refresh the bishop unto the honour of the Father and of Jesus Christ and of the Apostles[7].' They stand in the same relation to him, 'as the chords to the lyre[8].' If the bishop occupies the place of God or of Jesus Christ, the presbyters are as the Apostles, as the council of God[9]. If obedience is due to the bishop as the grace of God, it is due to the presbytery as the law of Jesus Christ[10].

Considerations suggested by this language.

It need hardly be remarked how subversive of the true spirit of Christianity, in the negation of individual freedom and the consequent suppression

[1] *Smyrn.* 8.

[2] *ib.*; comp. *Magn.* 4, *Philad.* 7.

[3] *Smyrn.* 8.

[4] *Polyc.* 8 ἐν ἑνότητι Θεοῦ καὶ ἐπισκόπου (v. l. ἐπισκοπῇ): comp. *Philad.* 3, 8.

[5] The word πρεσβυτέριον, which occurs 1 Tim. iv. 14, is very frequent in the Ignatian Epistles.

[6] *Magn.* 13.

[7] *Trall.* 12.

[8] *Ephes.* 4; comp. the metaphor in *Philad.* 1.

[9] *Trall.* 2, 3, *Magn.* 6, *Smyrn.* 8.

[10] *Magn.* 2.

of direct responsibility to God in Christ, is the crushing despotism with which this language, if taken literally, would invest the episcopal office. It is more important to bear in mind the extenuating fact, that the needs and distractions of the age seemed to call for a greater concentration of authority in the episcopate; and we might well be surprised, if at a great crisis the defence of an all-important institution were expressed in words carefully weighed and guarded.

The same views advanced in the interests of Ebionism.

Strangely enough, not many years after Ignatius thus asserted the claims of the episcopate as a safeguard of orthodoxy, another writer used the same instrument to advance a very different form of Christianity. The organization, which is thus employed to consolidate and advance the Catholic Church, might serve equally well to establish a compact Ebionite community. I have already mentioned the author of the *Clementine Homilies* as a staunch advocate of episcopacy[1]. His view of the sanctions and privileges of the office does not differ materially from that of Ignatius. 'The multitude of the faithful,' he says, 'must obey a single person, that so it may be able to continue in harmony.' Monarchy is a necessary condition of peace; this may be seen from the aspect of the world around: at present there are many kings, and the result is discord and war; in the world to come God has appointed one King only, that 'by reason of monarchy an indestructible peace may be established: therefore all ought to follow some one person as guide, preferring him in honour as the image of God; and this

[1] See above, p. 46.

guide must show the way that leadeth to the Holy City[1].' Accordingly he delights to speak of the bishop as occupying the place or the seat of Christ[2]. Every insult, he says, and every honour offered to a bishop is carried to Christ and from Christ is taken up to the presence of the Father; and thus it is requited manifold[3]. Similarly another writer of the Clementine cycle, if he be not the same, compares Christ to the captain, the bishop to the mate, and the presbyters to the sailors, while the lower orders and the laity have each their proper place in the ship of the Church[4].

Montanism, a reaction against this extravagance.

It is no surprise that such extravagant claims should not have been allowed to pass unchallenged. In opposition to the lofty hierarchical pretensions thus advanced on the one hand in the Ignatian letters on behalf of Catholicism and on the other by the Clementine writer in the interests of Ebionism, a strong spiritualist reaction set in. If in its mental aspect the heresy of Montanus must be regarded as a protest against the speculative subtleties of Gnosticism, on its practical side it was equally a rebound from the aggressive tyranny of hierarchical assumption. Montanus taught that the true succession of the Spirit, the authorized channel of Divine grace, must be sought not in the hierarchical but in the prophetic order. For a rigid outward system he substituted the free inward impulse. Wildly fanatical as were its manifestations, this reaction nevertheless issued from a true instinct which rebelled against the oppressive yoke of external

[1] *Clem. Hom.* iii. 61, 62.
[2] *ib.* iii. 60, 66, 70.
[3] *ib.* iii. 66, 70.
[4] *Clem. Hom.* Ep. Clem. 15.

tradition and did battle for the freedom of the individual spirit. Montanus was excommunicated and Montanism died out; but though dead, it yet spake; for a portion of its better spirit was infused into the Catholic Church, which it leavened and refreshed and invigorated.

2. Irenæus.

2. Irenæus followed Ignatius after an interval of about two generations. With the altered circumstances of the Church, the aspect of the episcopal office has also undergone a change. The religious atmosphere is now charged with heretical speculations of all kinds. Amidst the competition of rival teachers, all eagerly bidding for support, the perplexed believer asks for some decisive test by which he may try the claims of the disputants. To this question Irenæus supplies an answer. 'If you wish,' he argues, 'to ascertain the doctrine of the Apostles, apply to the Church of the Apostles. In the succession of bishops tracing their descent from the primitive age and appointed by the Apostles themselves, you have a guarantee for the transmission of the pure faith, which no isolated, upstart, self-constituted teacher can furnish. There is the Church of Rome for instance, whose episcopal pedigree is perfect in all its links, and whose earliest bishops, Linus and Clement, associated with the Apostles themselves: there is the Church of Smyrna again, whose bishop Polycarp, the disciple of St John, died only the other day[1].' Thus the episcopate is regarded now not so much as the *centre of ecclesiastical unity* but rather as the *depositary of apostolic tradition.*

The bishop the *depositary of primitive truth.*

[1] See especially iii. cc. 2, 3, 4, iv. 26. 2 sq., iv. 32. 1, v. præf., v. 20. 1, 2.

This view is not peculiar to Irenæus. It seems to have been advanced earlier by Hegesippus, for in a detached fragment he lays stress on the succession of the bishops at Rome and at Corinth, adding that in each church and in each succession the pure faith was preserved[1]; so that he seems here to be controverting that 'gnosis falsely so called' which elsewhere he denounces[2]. It is distinctly maintained by Tertullian, the younger contemporary of Irenæus, who refers, if not with the same frequency, at least with equal emphasis, to the tradition of the apostolic churches as preserved by the succession of the episcopate[3]. The same view held by Hegesippus and Tertullian.

3. As two generations intervened between Ignatius and Irenæus, so the same period roughly speaking separates Irenæus from CYPRIAN. If with Ignatius the bishop is the centre of Christian unity, if with Irenæus he is the depositary of the apostolic tradition, with Cyprian he is the *absolute vicegerent of Christ* in things spiritual. In mere strength of language indeed it would be difficult to surpass Ignatius, who lived about a century and a half earlier. With the single exception of the sacerdotal view of the ministry which had grown up meanwhile, Cyprian puts forward no assumption which this father had not advanced either literally or substantially long before. This one exception however is all important, for it raised the sanctions of the episcopate to a higher level and put new force into old titles of respect. Theoretically therefore it may be said that Cyprian took his stand on the combi- 3. CYPRIAN. The bishop the *vicegerent of Christ*.

[1] In Euseb. *H. E.* iv. 22. See above, p. 61.

[2] Euseb. *H. E.* iii. 32.

[3] Tertull. *de Praescr.* 32.

nation of the ecclesiastical authority as asserted by Ignatius with the sacerdotal claim which had been developed in the half century just past. But the real influence which he exercised in the elevation of the episcopate consisted not in the novelty of his theoretical views, but in his practical energy and success. The absolute supremacy of the bishop had remained hitherto a lofty title or at least a vague ill-defined assumption: it became through his exertions a substantial and patent and world-wide fact. The first prelate whose force of character vibrated throughout the whole of Christendom, he was driven not less by the circumstances of his position than by his own temperament and conviction to throw all his energy into this scale. And the permanent result was much vaster than he could have anticipated beforehand or realized after the fact. Forced into the episcopate against his will, he raised it to a position of absolute independence, from which it has never since been deposed. The two great controversies in which Cyprian engaged, though immediately arising out of questions of discipline, combined from opposite sides to consolidate and enhance the power of the bishops[1].

Influence of Cyprian on the episcopate.

First controversy.

The first question of dispute concerned the treatment of such as had lapsed during the recent persecution under Decius. Cyprian found himself

[1] The influence of Cyprian on the episcopate is ably stated in two vigorous articles by Kayser entitled *Cyprien ou l'Autonomie de l'Épiscopat* in the *Revue de Théologie* xv. pp. 138 sq., 242 sq. (1857). See also Rettberg *Thascius Cäcilius Cyprianus* p. 367 sq., Huther *Cyprian's Lehre von der Kirche* p. 59 sq. For Cyprian's work generally see *Smith's Dict. of Christ. Biogr.* s. v.

on this occasion doing battle for the episcopate against a twofold opposition, against the confessors who claimed the right of absolving and restoring these fallen brethren, and against his own presbyters who in the absence of their bishop supported the claims of the confessors. From his retirement he launched his shafts against this combined array, where an aristocracy of moral influence was leagued with an aristocracy of official position. With signal determination and courage in pursuing his aim, and with not less sagacity and address in discerning the means for carrying it out, Cyprian had on this occasion the further advantage, that he was defending the cause of order and right. He succeeded moreover in enlisting in his cause the rulers of the most powerful church in Christendom. The Roman clergy declared for the bishop and against the presbyters of Carthage. Of Cyprian's sincerity no reasonable question can be entertained. In maintaining the authority of his office he believed himself to be fighting his Master's battle, and he sought success as the only safeguard of the integrity of the Church of Christ. In this lofty and disinterested spirit, and with these advantages of position, he entered upon the contest.

Treatment of the lapsed.

It is unnecessary for my purpose to follow out the conflict in detail: to show how ultimately the positions of the two combatants were shifted, so that from maintaining discipline against the champions of too great laxity Cyprian found himself protecting the fallen against the advocates of too great severity; to trace the progress of the schism and the attempt to establish a rival episcopate; or to unravel the

entanglements of the Novatian controversy and lay open the intricate relations between Rome and Carthage[1]. It is sufficient to say that Cyprian's victory was complete. He triumphed over the confessors, triumphed over his own presbyters, triumphed over the schismatic bishop and his party. It was the most signal success hitherto achieved for the episcopate, because the battle had been fought and the victory won on this definite issue. The absolute supremacy of the episcopal office was thus established against the two antagonists from which it had most to fear, against a recognised aristocracy of ecclesiastical office and an irregular but not less powerful aristocracy of moral weight.

Power of the bishop in his own church defined.

The position of the bishop with respect to the individual church over which he ruled was thus defined by the first contest in which Cyprian engaged. The second conflict resulted in determining his relation to the Church universal. The schism which had grown up during the first conflict created the difficulty which gave occasion to the second. A question arose whether baptism by heretics and schismatics should be held valid or not. Stephen the Roman bishop, pleading the immemorial custom of his church, recognised its validity. Cyprian insisted on rebaptism in such cases. Hitherto the bishop of Carthage had acted in cordial harmony with Rome: but now there was a collision. Stephen,

Second controversy. Rebaptism of heretics.

[1] The intricacy of the whole proceeding is a strong evidence of the genuineness of the letters and other documents which contain the account of the controversy. The situations of the antagonists, varying and even interchanged with the change of circumstances, are very natural, but very unlike the invention of a forger who has a distinct side to maintain.

inheriting the haughty temper and aggressive policy of his earlier predecessor Victor, excommunicated those who differed from the Roman usage in this matter. These arrogant assumptions were directly met by Cyprian. He summoned first one and then another synod of African bishops, who declared in his favour. He had on his side also the churches of Asia Minor, which had been included in Stephen's edict of excommunication. Thus the bolt hurled by Stephen fell innocuous, and the churches of Africa and Asia retained their practice. The principle asserted in the struggle was not unimportant. As in the former conflict Cyprian had maintained the independent supremacy of the bishop over the officers and members of his own congregation, so now he contended successfully for his immunity from any interference from without. At a later period indeed Rome carried the victory, but the immediate result of this controversy was to establish the independence and enhance the power of the episcopate. Moreover this struggle had the further and not less important consequence of defining and exhibiting the relations of the episcopate to the Church in another way. As the individual bishop had been pronounced indispensable to the existence of the individual community, so the episcopal order was now put forward as the absolute indefeasible representative of the universal Church. Synods of bishops indeed had been held frequently before; but under Cyprian's guidance they assumed a prominence which threw all existing precedents into the shade. A 'one undivided episcopate' was his watchword. The unity of the Church, he maintained, consists in the

Relations of the bishops to the Universal Church defined.

unanimity of the bishops[1]. In this controversy, as in the former, he acted throughout on the principle, distinctly asserted, that the existence of the episcopal office was not a matter of practical advantage or ecclesiastical rule or even of apostolic sanction, but an absolute incontrovertible decree of God. The triumph of Cyprian therefore was the triumph of this principle.

Cyprian's view of the episcopate.

The greatness of Cyprian's influence on the episcopate is indeed due to this fact, that with him the statement of the principle precedes and necessitates the practical measures. Of the sharpness and distinctness of his sacerdotal views it will be time to speak presently; but of his conception of the episcopal office generally thus much may be said here, that he regards the bishop as exclusively the representative of God to the congregation and hardly, if at all, as the representative of the congregation before God. The bishop is the indispensable channel of divine grace, the indispensable bond of Christian brotherhood. The episcopate is not so much the roof as the foundation-stone of the ecclesiastical edifice; not so much the legitimate development as the primary condition of a church[2]. The bishop is

[1] *De Unit. Eccl.* 2 'Quam unitatem firmiter tenere et vindicare debemus maxime episcopi qui in ecclesia praesidemus, ut episcopatum quoque ipsum unum atque indivisum probemus'; and again 'Episcopatus unus est, cujus a singulis in solidum pars tenetur: ecclesia quoque una est etc.' So again he argues (*Epist.* 43) that, as there is one Church, there must be only 'unum altare et unum sacerdotium (i.e. one episcopate).' Comp. also *Epist.* 46, 55, 67.

[2] *Epist.* 66 'Scire debes episcopum in ecclesia esse et ecclesiam in episcopo, et si quis cum episcopo non sit, in ecclesia non

appointed directly by God, is responsible directly to God, is inspired directly from God[1]. This last point deserves especial notice. Though in words he frequently defers to the established usage of consulting the presbyters and even the laity in the appointment of officers and in other matters affecting the well-being of the community, yet he only makes the concession to nullify it immediately. He pleads a direct official inspiration[2] which enables him to dispense with ecclesiastical custom and to act on his own responsibility. Though the presbyters may still have retained the shadow of a controlling power over the acts of the bishop, though the courtesy of language by which they were recognised as fellow-presbyters[3] was not laid aside, yet for all practical ends the independent supremacy of the episcopate was completely established by the principles and the measures of Cyprian.

The power of the

In the investigation just concluded I have en-

esse'; *Epist.* 33 'Ut ecclesia super episcopos constituatur et omnis actus ecclesiae per eosdem praepositos gubernetur.' Hence the expression 'nec episcopum nec ecclesiam cogitans,' *Epist.* 41; hence also 'honor episcopi' is associated not only with 'ecclesiae ratio' (*Epist.* 33) but even with 'timor Dei' (*Epist.* 15). Compare also the language (*Epist.* 59) 'Nec ecclesia istic cuiquam clauditur nec episcopus alicui denegatur,' and again (*Epist.* 43) 'Soli cum episcopis non sint, qui contra episcopos rebellarunt.'

[1] See esp. *Epist.* 3, 43, 55, 59, 73, and above all 66 (*Ad Pupianum*).

[2] *Epist.* 38 'Expectanda non sunt testimonia humana, cum praecedunt divina suffragia'; *Epist.* 39 'Non humana suffragatione sed divina dignatione conjunctum'; *Epist.* 40 'Admonitos nos et instructos sciatis dignatione divina ut Numidicus presbyter adscribatur presbyterorum etc.'

[3] See above, p. 77, note 1.

bishops a question of practical convenience,

deavoured to trace the changes in the relative position of the first and second orders of the ministry, by which the power was gradually concentrated in the hands of the former. Such a development involves no new principle and must be regarded chiefly in its practical bearings. It is plainly competent for the Church at any given time to entrust a particular office with larger powers, as the emergency may require. And, though the grounds on which the independent authority of the episcopate was at times defended may have been false or exaggerated, no reasonable objection can be taken to later forms of ecclesiastical polity because the measure of power accorded to the bishop does not remain exactly the same as in the Church of the subapostolic ages. Nay, to many thoughtful and dispassionate minds even the gigantic power wielded by the popes during the middle ages will appear justifiable in itself (though they will repudiate the false pretensions on which it was founded, and the false opinions which were associated with it), since only by such a providential concentration of authority could the Church, humanly speaking, have braved the storms of those ages of anarchy and violence. Now however it is my purpose to investigate the origin and growth of a new principle, which is nowhere enunciated in the New Testament, but which notwithstanding has worked its way into general recognition and seriously modified the character of later Christianity. The progress of the *sacerdotal* view of the ministry is one of the most striking and important phenomena in the history of the Church.

and unconnected with sacerdotalism.

No sacerdotalism in the New Testament.

It has been pointed out already that the sacerdotal functions and privileges, which alone are mentioned in the apostolic writings, pertain to all believers alike and do not refer solely or specially to the ministerial office. If to this statement it be objected that the inference is built upon the *silence* of the Apostles and Evangelists, and that such reasoning is always precarious, the reply is that an exclusive sacerdotalism (as the word is commonly understood)[1] contradicts the general tenour of the Gospel. But indeed the strength or weakness of an argument drawn from silence depends wholly on the circumstance under which the silence is maintained. And in this case it cannot be considered devoid of weight. In the Pastoral Epistles for instance, which are largely occupied with questions relating to the Christian ministry, it seems scarcely possible that this aspect should have been overlooked, if it had any place in St Paul's teaching. The Apostle discusses at length the requirements, the responsibilities, the sanctions, of the ministerial office: he regards the presbyter as an example, as a teacher, as a philanthropist, as a ruler. How then, it may well be asked, are the

[1] In speaking of sacerdotalism, I assume the term to have essentially the same force as when applied to the Jewish priesthood. In a certain sense (to be considered hereafter) all officers appointed to minister 'for men in things pertaining to God' may be called priests; and sacerdotal phraseology, when first applied to the Christian ministry, may have borne this innocent meaning. But at a later date it was certainly so used as to imply a substantial identity of character with the Jewish priesthood, i.e. to designate the Christian minister as one who offers sacrifices and makes atonement for the sins of others.

sacerdotal functions, the sacerdotal privileges, of the office wholly set aside? If these claims were recognised by him at all, they must necessarily have taken a foremost place. The same argument again applies with not less force to those passages in the Epistles to the Corinthians, where St Paul asserts his apostolic authority against his detractors. Nevertheless, so entirely had the primitive conception of the Christian Church been supplanted by this sacerdotal view of the ministry, before the northern races were converted to the Gospel, and the dialects derived from the Latin took the place of the ancient tongue, that the languages of modern Europe very generally supply only one word to represent alike the priest of the Jewish or Heathen ceremonial and the presbyter of the Christian ministry[1].

Its rapid spread at a later date.

[1] It is a significant fact that in those languages which have only one word to express the two ideas, this word etymologically represents 'presbyterus' and not 'sacerdos,' e.g. the French *prêtre*, the German *priester*, and the English *priest*; thus showing that the sacerdotal idea was imported and not original. In the Italian, where two words *prete* and *sacerdote* exist side by side, there is no marked difference in usage, except that *prete* is the more common. If the latter brings out the sacerdotal idea more prominently, the former is also applied to Jewish and Heathen priests and therefore distinctly involves this idea. Wiclif's version of the New Testament naturally conforms to the Vulgate, in which it seems to be the rule to translate πρεσβύτεροι by 'presbyteri' (in Wiclif 'preestes') where it obviously denotes the second order in the ministry (e.g. Acts xiv. 23, 1 Tim. v. 17, 19, Tit. i. 5, James v. 14), and by 'seniores' (in Wiclif 'eldres' or 'elder men') in other passages: but if so, this rule is not always successfully applied (e.g. Acts xi. 30, xxi. 18, 1 Pet. v. 1). A doubt about the meaning may explain the anomaly that the word is translated 'presbyteri,' 'preestes,' Acts xv. 2, and 'seniores,' 'elder men,' Acts xv. 4, 6, 22, xvi. 4; though the per-

For, though no distinct traces of sacerdotalism are visible in the ages immediately after the Apostles, yet having once taken root in the Church it shot up rapidly into maturity. Towards the close of the second century we discern the first germs appearing above the surface: yet, shortly after the middle of the third, the plant has all but attained its full growth. The origin of this idea, the progress of its development, and the conditions favourable to its spread, will be considered in the present section of this essay.

Distinction of the clergy from the laity

A separation of orders, it is true, appeared at a much earlier date, and was in some sense involved in the appointment of a special ministry. This, and not more than this, was originally contained in the distinction of clergy and laity. If the sacerdotal view of the ministry engrafted itself on this distinction, it nevertheless was not necessarily implied or even indirectly suggested thereby. The term 'clerus,' as a designation of the ministerial office, did not owing to any existing associations convey the idea of sacerdotal functions. The word is not used of the Aaronic priesthood in any special sense which would explain its transference to the Christian ministry. It is indeed said of the Levites, that they have no 'clerus' in the land, the Lord Himself being their 'clerus'[1]. But the Jewish

not derived from the Levitical priesthood.

sons intended are the same. In Acts xx. 17, it is rendered in Wiclif's version 'the grettist men of birthe,' a misunderstanding of the Vulgate 'majores natu.' The English versions of the reformers and the reformed Church from Tyndale downward translate πρεσβύτεροι uniformly by 'elders.'

[1] Deut. x. 9, xviii. 1, 2; comp. Num. xxvi. 62, Deut. xii. 12, xiv. 27, 29, Josh. xiv. 3. Jerome (*Epist.* lii. 5, 1. p. 258)

priesthood is never described conversely as the special 'clerus' of Jehovah: while on the other hand the metaphor thus inverted is more than once applied to the whole Israelite people[1]. Up to this point therefore the analogy of Old Testament usage would have suggested 'clerus' as a name rather for the entire body of the faithful than for the ministry specially or exclusively. Nor do other references to the clerus or lot in connexion with the Levitical priesthood countenance its special application. The tithes, it is true, were assigned to the sons of Levi as their 'clerus'[2]; but in this there is nothing distinctive, and in fact the word is employed much more prominently in describing the lands allotted to the whole people. Again the courses of priests and Levites selected to conduct the temple-service were appointed by lot[3]; but the mode adopted in distributing a particular set of duties is far too special to have supplied a distinctive name for the whole order. If indeed it were an established fact that the Aaronic priesthood at the time of the Christian era commonly bore the name of 'clergy,' we might be driven to explain the designation in this or in some similar way; but apparently no evidence of any such usage exists[4], and it is there-

says, 'Propterea vocantur clerici, vel quia de sorte sunt Domini, vel quia ipse Dominus sors, id est pars, clericorum est.' The former explanation would be reasonable, if it were supported by the language of the Old Testament: the latter is plainly inadequate.

[1] Deut. iv. 20 εἶναι αὐτῷ λαὸν ἔγκληρον: comp. ix. 29 οὗτοι λαός σου καὶ κλῆρός σου.

[2] Num. xviii. 21, 24, 26.

[3] 1 Chron. xxiv. 5, 7, 31, xxv. 8, 9.

[4] On the other hand λαὸς is used of the people, as contrasted either with the rulers or with

fore needless to cast about for an explanation of a fact which itself is only conjectural. The origin of the term clergy, as applied to the Christian ministry, must be sought elsewhere.

Origin of 'Clerus' as a name for the Christian ministry.

And the record of the earliest appointment made by the Christian Church after the Ascension of the Lord seems to supply the clue. Exhorting the assembled brethren to elect a successor in place of Judas, St Peter tells them that the traitor 'had been numbered among them and had received the *lot* (κλῆρον) of the ministry': while in the account of the subsequent proceedings it is recorded that the Apostles 'distributed *lots*' to the brethren, and that 'the *lot* fell on Matthias and he was added to the eleven Apostles[1].' The following therefore seems to be the sequence of meanings, by which the word κλῆρος arrived at this peculiar sense: (1) the lot by which the office was assigned; (2) the office thus assigned by lot; (3) the body of persons holding the office. The first two senses are illustrated by the passages quoted from the Acts; and from the second to the third the transition is easy and natural. It must not be supposed however that the mode of appointing officers by lot prevailed

the priests. From this latter contrast comes λαϊκός, 'laic' or 'profane,' and λαϊκόω 'to profane'; which, though not found in the LXX., occur frequently in the versions of Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion (λαϊκός, 1 Sam. xxi. 4, Ezek. xlviii. 15; λαϊκόω, Deut. xx. 6, xxviii. 30, Ruth i. 12, Ezek. vii. 22); comp. Clem. Rom. 40.

[1] Acts i. 17 ἔλαχεν τὸν κλῆρον, 26 ἔδωκαν κλήρους αὐτοῖς καὶ ἔπεσεν ὁ κλῆρος ἐπὶ Ματθίαν. In ver. 25 κλῆρον is a false reading. The use of the word in 1 Pet. v. 3 κατακυριεύοντες τῶν κλήρων (i.e. the flocks assigned to them) does not illustrate this meaning.

generally in the early Church. Besides the case of Matthias no other instance is recorded in the New Testament; nor is this procedure likely to have been commonly adopted. But just as in the passage quoted the word is used to describe the office of Judas, though Judas was certainly not selected by lot, so generally from signifying one special mode of appointment to office it got to signify office in the Church generally[1]. If this account of the application of 'clerus' to the Christian ministry be correct, we should expect to find it illustrated by a corresponding progress in the actual usage of the word. And this is in fact the case. The sense 'clerical appointment or office' chronologically precedes the sense 'clergy.' The former meaning occurs several times in Irenæus. He speaks of Hyginus as 'holding the ninth clerus of the episcopal succession from the Apostles[2]'; and of Eleutherus in like manner he says, 'He now occupies the clerus of the episcopate in the tenth place from the Apostles[3].' On the other hand the

[1] See Clem. Alex. *Quis div. salv.* 42, where κληροῦν is 'to appoint to the ministry'; and Iren. iii. 3. 3 κληροῦσθαι τὴν ἐπισκοπήν. A similar extension of meaning is seen in this same word κλῆρος applied to land. Signifying originally a piece of ground assigned by lot, it gets to mean landed property generally, whether obtained by assignment or by inheritance or in any other way.

[2] Iren. i. 27. 1.

[3] Iren. iii. 3. 3. In this passage however, as in the preceding, the word is explained by a qualifying genitive. In Hippol. *Haer.* ix. 12 (p. 290), ἤρξαντο ἐπίσκοποι καὶ πρεσβύτεροι καὶ διάκονοι δίγαμοι καὶ τρίγαμοι καθίστασθαι εἰς κλήρους, it is used absolutely of 'clerical offices.' The Epistle of the Gallican Churches (Euseb. *H. E.* v. 1) speaks more than once of the κλῆρος τῶν μαρτύρων, i.e. the order or rank of martyrs: comp.

earliest instance of 'clerus,' meaning clergy, seems to occur in Tertullian[1], who belongs to the next generation.

No sacerdotal idea conveyed by the term.

It will thus be seen that the use of 'clerus' to denote the ministry cannot be traced to the Jewish priesthood, and is therefore wholly unconnected with any sacerdotal views. The term does indeed recognise the clergy as an order distinct from the laity; but this is a mere question of ecclesiastical rule or polity, and involves no doctrinal bearings. The origin of sacerdotal phraseology and ideas must be sought elsewhere.

Silence of the apostolic fathers on sacerdotalism.

Attention has been already directed to the absence of any appeal to sacerdotal claims in the Pastoral Epistles. The silence of the apostolic fathers deserves also to be noticed. Though the genuine letters of all three may be truly said to hinge on questions relating to the ministry, no distinct traces of this influence are visible. St Clement, as the representative of the Roman Church, writes to the Christian brotherhood at Corinth, offering friendly counsel in their disputes and rebuking their factious and unworthy conduct towards certain presbyters whom, though blameless, they had ejected from office. He appeals to motives of Christian love, to principles of Christian order. He adduces a large number of examples from biblical history

Clement.

Test. xii. Patr. Levi 8. See Ritschl p. 390 sq., to whom I am indebted for several of the passages which are quoted in this investigation.

[1] e.g. *de Monog.* 12 'Unde enim episcopi et clerus?' and again 'Extollimur et inflamur adversus clerum.' Perhaps however earlier instances may have escaped notice. In Clem. Alex. *Quis div. salv.* 42 the word seems not to be used in this sense.

condemnatory of jealousy and insubordination. He urges that men, who had been appointed directly by the Apostles or by persons themselves so appointed, ought to have received better treatment. Dwelling at great length on the subject, he nevertheless advances no sacerdotal claims or immunities on behalf of the ejected ministers. He does, it is true, adduce the Aaronic priesthood and the Temple service as showing that God has appointed set persons and set places and will have all things done in order. He had before illustrated this lesson by the subordination of ranks in an army, and by the relation of the different members of the human body: he had insisted on the duties of the strong towards the weak, of the rich towards the poor, of the wise towards the ignorant, and so forth: he had enforced the appeal by reminding his readers of the utter feebleness and insignificance of man in the sight of God, as represented in the Scriptures of the Old Testament; and then follows the passage which contains the allusion in question: 'He hath not commanded (the offerings and ministrations) to be performed at random or in disorder, but at fixed times and seasons; and where and through whom He willeth them to be performed, He hath ordained by His supreme will. They therefore who make their offerings at the appointed seasons are acceptable and blessed, since following the ordinances of the Master they do not go wrong. For to the high priest peculiar services are entrusted, and the priests have their peculiar office assigned to them, and on Levites peculiar ministrations are imposed: the layman is bound by lay ordinances. Let each of you,

Import of his comparison with the Aaronic priesthood.

brethren, in his own rank give thanks to God, retaining a good conscience, not transgressing the appointed rule of his service (λειτουργίας) etc.[1]' Here it is clear that in St Clement's conception the sanction possessed in common by the Aaronic priesthood and the Christian ministry is not the sacerdotal consecration, but the divinely appointed order. He passes over in silence the numerous passages in the Old Testament which enjoin obedience to the priests; while the only sentence (§ 42) which he puts forward as anticipating and enforcing the authority of the Christian ministry is a misquoted and misinterpreted verse from Isaiah; 'I will establish their overseers (bishops) in righteousness and their ministers (deacons) in faith[2].' Again a little later he mentions in illustration the murmuring of the Israelites which was rebuked by the budding of Aaron's rod[3]. But here too he makes it clear how far he considers the analogy to extend. He calls the sedition in the one

[1] Clem. Rom. 40, 41. Neander (*Church History*, I. p. 272 note, Bohn's translation) conjectures that this passage is an 'interpolation from a hierarchical interest,' and Dean Milman (*Hist. of Christianity*, III. p. 259) says that it is 'rejected by all judicious and impartial scholars.' At the risk of forfeiting all claim to judiciousness and impartiality one may venture to demur to this arbitrary criticism. Indeed the recent discovery of a second independent MS and of a Syriac Version, both containing the suspected passage, may be regarded as decisive on this point.

[2] Is. lx. 17, where the A.V. correctly renders the original, 'I will also make thy officers (lit. magistrates) peace and thine exactors (i.e. task-masters) righteousness'; i.e. there shall be no tyranny or oppression. The LXX departs from the original, and Clement has altered the LXX. By this double divergence a reference to the two orders of the ministry is obtained.

[3] Clem. Rom. 43.

case 'jealousy concerning the priesthood,' in the other 'strife concerning the honour of the episcopate[1].' He keeps the names and the offices distinct. The significance of this fact will be felt at once by comparing his language with the expressions used by any later writer, such as Cyprian, who was penetrated with the spirit of sacerdotalism[2].

Ignatius. Of St Ignatius, as the champion of episcopacy, much has been said already. It is sufficient to add here, that he never regards the ministry as a sacerdotal office. This is equally true, whether we accept as genuine the whole of the seven letters in the Short Greek, or only those portions contained in the Syriac version. While these letters teem with passages enjoining the strictest obedience to bishops, while their language is frequently so strong as to sound almost profane, this father never once appeals to sacerdotal claims[3], though such an appeal would have made his case more than doubly strong. If it

[1] Contrast § 43 *ζήλου ἐμπεσόντος περὶ τῆς ἱερωσύνης* with § 44 *ἔρις ἔσται ἐπὶ τοῦ ὀνόματος τῆς ἐπισκοπῆς*. The common feature which connects the two offices together is stated in the words, § 43 *ἵνα μὴ ἀκαταστασία γένηται*.

[2] See below, p. 119 sq.

[3] Some passages are quoted in Greenwood *Cathedra Petri* 1. p. 73 as tending in this direction, e.g. *Philad.* 9 *καλοὶ καὶ οἱ ἱερεῖς, κρεῖσσον δὲ ὁ ἀρχιερεύς κ.τ.λ.* But rightly interpreted they do not favour this view. In the passage quoted for instance, the writer seems to be maintaining the superiority of the new covenant, as represented by the great High-Priest (*ἀρχιερεύς*) in and through whom the whole Church has access to God, over the old dispensation of the Levitical priesthood (*ἱερεῖς*). If this interpretation be correct, the passage echoes the teaching of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and is opposed to exclusive sacerdotalism. On the meaning of *θυσιαστήριον* in the Ignatian Epistles see below, p. 130, note 1.

be ever safe to take the sentiments of an individual writer as expressing the belief of his age, we may infer from the silence which pervades these letters, that the sacerdotal view of the ministry had not yet found its way into the Christian Church.

When we pass on to the third apostolic father, the same phenomenon is repeated. Polycarp, like Clement and Ignatius, occupies much space in discussing the duties and the claims of Christian ministers. He takes occasion especially to give his correspondents advice as to a certain presbyter who had disgraced his office by a grave offence[1]. Yet he again knows nothing, or at least says nothing, of any sacerdotal privileges which claimed respect, or of any sacerdotal sanctity which has been violated. Polycarp.

Justin Martyr writes about a generation later. He speaks at length and with emphasis on the eucharistic offerings. Here at least we might expect to find sacerdotal views of the Christian ministry propounded. Yet this is far from being the case. He does indeed lay stress on sacerdotal functions, but these belong to the whole body of the Church, and are not in any way the exclusive right of the clergy. 'So we,' he writes, when arguing against Trypho the Jew, 'who through the name of Jesus have believed as one man in God the maker of the universe, having divested ourselves of our filthy garments, that is our sins, through the name of His first-born Son, and having been refined (πυρωθέντες) by the word of His calling, are the true high-priestly race of God, as God Himself also beareth witness, saying that in every place among the Gentiles are Justin Martyr maintains an universal priesthood.

[1] See *Philippians* p. 63 sq.

men offering sacrifices well-pleasing unto Him and pure (Mal. i. 11). Yet God doth not receive sacrifices from any one, except through His priests. Therefore God anticipating all sacrifices through this name, which Jesus Christ ordained to be offered, I mean those offered by the Christians in every region of the earth with (ἐπὶ) the thanksgiving (the eucharist) of the bread and of the cup, beareth witness that they are well-pleasing to Him; but the sacrifices offered by you and through those your priests He rejecteth, saying, "And your sacrifices I will not accept from your hands etc. (Mal. i. 10)"[1].' The whole Christian people therefore (such is Justin's conception) have not only taken the place of the Aaronic priesthood, but have become a nation of *high-priests*, being made one with the great High-Priest of the new covenant and presenting their eucharistic offerings in His name.

Irenæus

Another generation leads us from Justin Martyr to Irenæus. When Irenæus writes, the second century is very far advanced. Yet still the silence which has accompanied us hitherto remains unbroken. And here again it is important to observe that Irenæus, if he held the sacerdotal view, had every motive for urging it, since the importance and authority of the episcopate occupy a large space in his teaching. Nevertheless he not only withholds this title as a special designation of the Christian ministry, but advances an entirely different view of the priestly office. He recognises only the priesthood of moral holiness, the priesthood of apostolic self-denial. Thus commenting on the reference made

acknowledges only a *moral* priesthood.

[1] *Dial. c. Tryph.* c. 116, 117, p. 344.

by our Lord to the incident in David's life where the king and his followers eat the shew-bread, 'which it is not lawful to eat save for the priests alone,' Irenæus remarks[1]; 'He excuseth His disciples by the words of the law, and signifieth that it is lawful for priests to act freely. For David had been called to be a priest in the sight of God, although Saul carried on a persecution against him; for all just men belong to the sacerdotal order[2]. Now all apostles of the Lord are priests, for they inherit neither lands nor houses here, but ever attend on the altar and on God': 'Who are they,' he goes on, 'that have left father and mother and have renounced all their kindred for the sake of the word of God and His covenant, but the disciples of the Lord? Of these Moses saith again, "But they shall have no inheritance; for the Lord Himself shall be their inheritance"; and again, "The Priests, the Levites, in the whole tribe of Levi shall have no part nor inheritance with Israel: the first-fruits (fructificationes) of the Lord are their inheritance; they shall eat them." For this reason also Paul saith, "I require not the gift, but I require the fruit." The disciples of the Lord, he would say, were allowed when hungry to take food of the seeds (they had sown): for "The

[1] *Haer.* iv. 8. 3.

[2] This sentence is cited by John Damascene and Antonius *πᾶς βασιλεὺς δίκαιος ἱερατικὴν ἔχει τάξιν*; but the words were quoted doubtless from memory by the one writer and borrowed by the other from him. *βασιλεὺς* is not represented in the Latin and does not suit the context. The close conformity of their quotations from the Ignatian letters is a sufficient proof that these two writers are not independent authorities; see the passages in Cureton's *Corp. Ignat.* p. 180 sq.

labourer is worthy of his food."' Again, striking upon the same topic in a later passage[1] and commenting on the words of Jeremiah (xxxi. 14), "I will intoxicate the soul of the priests the sons of Levi, and my people shall be filled with my good things," he adds, 'we have shown in a former book, that all disciples of the Lord are priests and Levites: who also profaned the Sabbath in the temple and are blameless.' Thus Irenæus too recognises the whole body of the faithful under the new dispensation as the counterparts of the sons of Levi under the old. The position of the Apostles and Evangelists has not yet been abandoned.

Explanation of a passage in Polycrates.

A few years later, but still before the close of the century, Polycrates of Ephesus writes to Victor of Rome. Incidentally he speaks of St John as 'having been made a priest' and 'wearing the mitre'[2]; and this might seem to be a distinct expression of sacerdotal views, for the 'mitre' to which he alludes is doubtless the tiara of the Jewish high-priest. But it may very reasonably be questioned if this is the correct meaning of the passage. Whether St John did actually wear this decoration of the high-priestly office, or whether Polycrates has mistaken a symbolical expression in some earlier writer for an actual fact, or whether lastly his language itself should be treated as a violent metaphor, I have had occasion

[1] *Haer.* v. 34. 3.

[2] In Euseb. *H. E.* v. 24 ὃς ἐγενήθη ἱερεὺς τὸ πέταλον πεφορεκώς. Comp. Tertull. *adv. Jud.* 14 'exornatus podere et mitra,' *Test. xii. Patr.* Levi 8 ἀναστὰς ἔνδυσαι τὴν στολὴν τῆς ἱερατείας ...τὸν ποδήρη τῆς ἀληθείας καὶ τὸ πέταλον τῆς πίστεως κ.τ.λ. See also, as an illustration of the metaphor, Tertull. *Monog.* 12 'Cum ad peraequationem disciplinae sacerdotalis provocamur, *deponimus infulas*.'

to discuss above[1]. But in any case the notice is explained by the language of St John himself, who regards the whole body of believers as high-priests of the new covenant[2]; and it is certain that the contemporaries of Polycrates still continued to hold similar language[3]. As a figurative expression or as a literal fact, the notice points to St John as the veteran teacher, the chief representative, of a pontifical race. On the other hand, it is possible that this was not the sense which Polycrates himself attached to the figure or the fact: and if so, we have here perhaps the earliest passage in any extant Christian writing where the sacerdotal view of the ministry is distinctly put forward.

Clement of Alexandria.

Clement of Alexandria was a contemporary of Polycrates. Though his extant writings are considerable in extent and though they are largely occupied with questions of Christian ethics and social life, the ministry does not hold a prominent place in them. In the few passages where he mentions it, he does not betray any tendency to sacerdotal or even to hierarchical views. The bias of his mind indeed lay in an opposite direction. He would be much more inclined to maintain an aristocracy of intellectual contemplation than of sacerdotal office. And in Alexandria generally, as we have seen, the development of the hierarchy was slower than in other churches. How far he is from

[1] *Dissertations on the Apostolic Age*, p. 121 note.

[2] Rev. ii. 17; see the commentators.

[3] So Justin in the words already quoted (p. 109), *Dial. c. Tryph.* § 116 ἀρχιερατικὸν τὸ ἀληθινὸν γένος ἐσμὲν τοῦ Θεοῦ. See also the passage of Origen quoted below, p. 117.

maintaining a sacerdotal view of the ministry and how substantially he coincides with Irenæus in this respect, will appear from the following passage. 'It is possible for men even now, by exercising themselves in the commandments of the Lord and by living a perfect gnostic life in obedience to the Gospel, to be inscribed in the roll of the Apostles. Such men are genuine presbyters of the Church and true deacons of the will of God, if they practise and teach the things of the Lord, being not indeed ordained by men nor considered righteous because they are presbyters, but enrolled in the presbytery because they are righteous: and though here on earth they may not be honoured with a chief seat, yet shall they sit on the four and twenty thrones judging the people[1].' It is quite consistent with this truly spiritual view, that he should elsewhere recognise the presbyter, the deacon, and the layman, as distinct orders[2]. But on the other hand he never uses the words 'priest,' 'priestly,' 'priesthood,' of the Christian ministry. In one passage indeed he contrasts laity and priesthood, but without any such reference. Speaking of the veil of the temple and assigning to it a symbolical meaning, he describes it as 'a barrier against laic unbelief,' behind which 'the priestly ministration is hidden[3].' Here the laymen and the priests are respectively those who reject and those who appropriate the spiritual mysteries of the Gospel. Accordingly in the context

His 'gnostic' priesthood.

[1] *Strom.* vi. 13, p. 793.

[2] *Strom.* iii. 90, p. 552.

[3] *Strom.* v. 33 sq., p. 665 sq. Bp Kaye (*Clement of Alexandria* p. 464) incorrectly adduces this passage as an express mention of 'the distinction between the clergy and laity.'

St Clement, following up the hint thrown out in the Epistle to the Hebrews, gives a spiritual meaning to all the furniture of the holy place.

Tertullian holds a sacerdotal view of the ministry,

His younger contemporary Tertullian is the first to assert direct sacerdotal claims on behalf of the Christian ministry. Of the heretics he complains that they impose sacerdotal functions on laymen[1]. 'The right of giving baptism,' he says elsewhere, 'belongs to the chief priest (summus sacerdos), that is, the bishop[2].' 'No woman,' he asserts, 'ought to teach, baptize, celebrate the eucharist, or arrogate to herself the performance of any duty pertaining to males, much less of the sacerdotal office[3].' And generally he uses the words sacerdos, sacerdotium, sacerdotalis, of the Christian ministry. It seems plain moreover from his mode of speaking, that such language was not peculiar to himself but passed current in the churches among which he moved. Yet he himself supplies the true counterpoise to this special sacerdotalism in his strong assertion of the universal priesthood of all true believers. 'We should be foolish,' so he writes when arguing against second marriages, 'to suppose that a latitude is allowed to laymen which is denied to priests. Are not we laymen also priests? It is written, "He hath also made us a kingdom and priests to God and His Father." It is the authority of the Church which makes a difference between the order (the clergy) and the people—this authority and the consecration of their rank by the assignment of special benches

yet qualifies it by his assertion of an universal priesthood.

[1] *de Praescr. Haer.* 41 'Nam et laicis sacerdotalia munera injungunt.'

[2] *de Baptismo* 17.

[3] *de Virg. vel.* 9.

to the clergy. Thus where there is no bench of clergy, you present the eucharistic offerings and baptize and are your own sole priest. For where three are gathered together, there is a church, even though they be laymen. Therefore if you exercise the rights of a priest in cases of necessity, it is your duty also to observe the discipline enjoined on a priest, where of necessity you exercise the rights of a priest[1].' And in another treatise he writes in bitter irony, 'When we begin to exalt and inflame ourselves against the clergy, then we are all one; then we are all priests, because, "He made us priests to God and His Father": but when we are required to submit ourselves equally to the priestly discipline, we throw off our fillets and are no longer equal[2].' These passages, it is true, occur in treatises probably written after Tertullian had become wholly or in part a Montanist: but this consideration is of little consequence, for they bear witness to the fact that the scriptural doctrine of an universal priesthood was common ground to himself and his opponents, and had not yet been obscured by the sacerdotal view of the Christian ministry[3].

[1] *de Exh. Cast.* 7. See Kaye's *Tertullian* p. 211, whose interpretation of 'honor per ordinis consessum sanctificatus' I have adopted.

[2] *de Monog.* 12. I have taken the reading 'impares' for 'pares,' as required by the context.

[3] Tertullian regards Christ, our great High-Priest, as the counterpart under the new dispensation of the priest under the old, and so interprets the text 'Show thyself to the priest'; *adv. Marc.* iv. 9, *adv. Jud.* 14. Again, he uses 'sacerdos' in a moral sense, *de Spectac.* 16 'sacerdotes pacis,' *de Cult. Fem.* ii. 12 'sacerdotes pudicitiae,' *ad Uxor.* i. 6 (comp. 7) 'virginitatis et viduitatis sacerdotia.' On the other hand in *de Pall.* 4 he seems to compare the Christian minister with the heathen

Sacerdotal language in Hippolytus.

An incidental expression in Hippolytus serves to show that a few years later than Tertullian sacerdotal terms were commonly used to designate the different orders of the clergy. 'We,' says the zealous bishop of Portus, 'being successors of the Apostles and partaking of the same grace both of *high-priesthood* and of teaching and accounted guardians of the Church, do not close our eyes drowsily or tacitly suppress the true word, etc.[1]'

Origen interprets the priesthood spiritually,

The march of sacerdotal ideas was probably slower at Alexandria than at Carthage or Rome. Though belonging to the next generation, Origen's views are hardly so advanced as those of Tertullian. In the temple of the Church, he says, there are two sanctuaries: the heavenly accessible only to Jesus Christ, our great High-Priest; the earthly, open to all priests of the new covenant, that is, to all faithful believers. For Christians are a sacerdotal race and therefore have access to the outer sanctuary. There they must present their offerings, their holocausts of love and self-denial. From this outer sanctuary our High-Priest takes the fire, as He enters the Holy of Holies to offer incense to the Father (see Lev. xvi. 12)[2]. Very many professed Christians, he writes elsewhere (I am here abridging his words), occupied chiefly with the concerns of this world and dedicating few of their actions to God, are represented by the tribes, who merely present their tithes and first-fruits. On the other hand 'those who are devoted to the divine word, and are dedicated sincerely to

priests, but too much stress must not be laid on a rhetorical image.

[1] *Haer.* procem. p. 3.

[2] *Hom. ix. in Lev.* 9, 10 (II. p. 243 Delarue).

the sole worship of God, may not unreasonably be called priests and Levites according to the difference in this respect of their impulses tending thereto.' Lastly 'those who excel the men of their own generation perchance will be high-priests.' They are only high-priests however after the order of Aaron, our Lord Himself being High-Priest after the order of Melchisedek[1]. Again in a third place he says, 'The Apostles and they that are made like unto the Apostles, being priests after the order of the great High-Priest, having received the knowledge of the worship of God and being instructed by the Spirit, know for what sins they ought to offer sacrifices, etc.[2]' In all these passages Origen has taken spiritual enlightenment and not sacerdotal office to be the Christian counterpart to the Aaronic priesthood. Elsewhere however he makes use of sacerdotal terms to describe the ministry of the Church[3]; and in one place distinguishes the priests and the Levites as representing the presbyters and deacons respectively[4].

but applies sacerdotal terms to the ministry.

[1] *In Joann.* i. § 3 (IV. p. 3).

[2] *de Orat.* 28 (I. p. 255). See also *Hom. iv. in Num.* 3 (II. p. 283).

[3] *Hom. v. in Lev.* 4 (II. p. 208 sq.) 'Discant sacerdotes Domini qui ecclesiis praesunt,' and also ib. *Hom.* ii. 4 (II. p. 191) 'Cum non erubescit sacerdoti Domini indicare peccatum suum et quaerere medicinam' (he quotes James v. 14 in illustration). But *Hom. x. in Num.* 1, 2 (II. p. 302), quoted by Redepenning (*Origenes* II. p. 417), hardly bears this sense, for the 'pontifex' applies to our Lord; and it is clear from *Hom. in Ps.* xxxvii. § 6 (II. p. 688) that in Origen's opinion the confessor to the penitent need not be an ordained minister. The passages in Redepenning's *Origenes* bearing on this subject are I. p. 357, II. pp. 250, 417, 436 sq.

[4] *Hom. xii. in Jerem.* 3 (III. p. 196) 'If any one therefore among these priests (I mean us

Hitherto the sacerdotal view of the Christian ministry has not been held apart from a distinct recognition of the sacerdotal functions of the whole Christian body. The minister is thus regarded as a priest, because he is the mouthpiece, the representative, of a priestly race. Such appears to be the conception of Tertullian, who speaks of the clergy as separate from the laity only because the Church in the exercise of her prerogative has for convenience entrusted to them the performance of certain sacerdotal functions belonging properly to the whole congregation, and of Origen, who, giving a moral and spiritual interpretation to the sacerdotal office, considers the priesthood of the clergy to differ from the priesthood of the laity only in degree, in so far as the former devote their time and their thoughts more entirely to God than the latter. So long as this important aspect is kept in view, so long as the priesthood of the ministry is regarded as springing from the priesthood of the whole body, the teaching of the Apostles has not been directly violated. But still it was not a safe nomenclature which assigned the terms sacerdos, ἱερεύς, and the like, to the ministry, as a *special* designation. The appearance of this phenomenon marks the period of transition from the universal sacerdotalism of the New Testament to the particular sacerdotalism of a later age.

The priesthood of the ministry springs from the priesthood of the congregation.

If Tertullian and Origen are still hovering on the border, Cyprian has boldly transferred himself into the new domain. It is not only that he uses the terms sacerdos, sacerdotium, sacerdotalis, of the

Cyprian the champion of undisguised sacerdotalism.

the presbyters) or among these people (I mean the deacons) Levites who stand about the etc.'

ministry with a frequency hitherto without parallel. But he treats all the passages in the Old Testament which refer to the privileges, the sanctions, the duties, and the responsibilities of the Aaronic priesthood, as applying to the officers of the Christian Church. His opponents are profane and sacrilegious; they have passed sentence of death on themselves by disobeying the command of the Lord in Deuteronomy to 'hear the priest[1]'; they have forgotten the injunction of Solomon to honour and reverence God's priests[2]; they have despised the example of St Paul who regretted that he 'did not know it was the high priest[3]'; they have been guilty of the sin of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram[4]. These passages are urged again and again. They are urged moreover, as applying not by parity of reasoning, not by analogy of circumstance, but as absolute and immediate and unquestionable. As Cyprian crowned the edifice of episcopal power, so also was he the first to put forward without relief or disguise the sacerdotal assumptions; and so uncompromising was the tone in which he asserted them, that nothing was left to his successors but to enforce his principles and reiterate his language[5].

After thus tracing the gradual departure from the Apostolic teaching in the encroachment of the

[1] Deut. xvii. 12; see *Epist.* 3, 4, 43, 59, 66.

[2] Though the words are ascribed to Solomon, the quotation comes from Ecclus. vii. 29, 31; see *Epist.* 3.

[3] Acts xxiii. 4; see *Epist.* 3, 59, 66.

[4] *De Unit. Eccl.* p. 83 (Fell), *Epist.* 3, 67, 69, 73.

[5] The sacerdotal language in the *Apostolical Constitutions* is hardly less strong, while it is more systematic; but their date is uncertain and cannot well be placed earlier than Cyprian.

sacerdotal on the pastoral and ministerial view of the clergy, it will be instructive to investigate the causes to which this divergence from primitive truth may be ascribed. To the question whether the change was due to Jewish or Gentile influences, opposite answers have been given. To some it has appeared as a reproduction of the Aaronic priesthood, due to Pharisaic tendencies, such as we find among St Paul's converts in Galatia and at Corinth, still lingering in the Church: to others, as imported into Christianity by the ever-increasing mass of heathen converts who were incapable of shaking off their sacerdotal prejudices and appreciating the free spirit of the Gospel. The latter view seems correct in the main, but requires some modification.

Were sacerdotal views due to Jewish or Gentile influences?

At all events so far as the evidence of extant writings goes, there is no reason for supposing that sacerdotalism was especially rife among the Jewish converts. The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs may be taken to represent one phase of Judaic Christianity; the Clementine writings exhibit another. In both alike there is an entire absence of sacerdotal views of the ministry. The former work indeed dwells at length on our Lord's office, as the descendant and heir of Levi[1], and alludes more than once to His institution of a new priesthood; but this priesthood is spiritual and comprehensive. Christ Himself is the High-Priest[2], and the sacerdotal office is described as being 'after the type of the Gentiles, extending to all the Gentiles[3].' On the Christian ministry the writer is silent. In the

The earliest Jewish Christian writings contain no traces of sacerdotalism.

[1] *Dissertations on the Apostolic Age*, p. 76.

[2] Ruben 6, Symeon 7, Levi 18.

[3] Levi 8.

Clementine Homilies the case is somewhat different, but the inference is still more obvious. Though the episcopate is regarded as the backbone of the Church, though the claims of the ministry are urged with great distinctness, no appeal is ever made to priestly sanctity as the ground of this exalted estimate[1]. Indeed the hold of the Levitical priesthood on the mind of the pious Jew must have been materially weakened at the Christian era by the development of the synagogue organization on the one hand, and by the ever-growing influence of the learned and literary classes, the scribes and rabbis, on the other. The points on which the Judaizers of the apostolic age insist are the rite of circumcision, the distinction of meats, the observance of sabbaths, and the like. The necessity of the priesthood was not, or at least is not known to have been, part of their programme. Among the Essene Jews especially, who went so far as to repudiate the temple sacrifices, no great importance could have been attached to the Aaronic priesthood[2]: and after the Apostolic age at all events, the most active Judaizers of the Dispersion seem to have belonged to the Essene type. But indeed the overwhelming argument against ascribing the growth of sacerdotal views to Jewish influence lies in the fact, that there

[1] See the next note.

[2] *Dissertations on the Apostolic Age*, pp. 79, 82 sq., 350; *Colossians* p. 89. In the syzygies of the Clementine Homilies (ii. 16, 33) Aaron is opposed to Moses, the high-priest to the lawgiver, as the bad to the good, the false to the true, like Cain to Abel, Ishmael to Isaac, etc. In the Recognitions the estimate of the high-priest's position is still unfavourable (i. 46, 48). Compare the statement in Justin, *Dial. c. Tryph.* 117.

is a singular absence of distinct sacerdotalism during the first century and a half, when alone on any showing Judaism was powerful enough to impress itself on the belief of the Church at large.

Sacerdotalism was due to Gentile influences,

It is therefore to Gentile feeling that this development must be ascribed. For the heathen, familiar with auguries, lustrations, sacrifices, and depending on the intervention of some priest for all the manifold religious rites of the state, the club, and the family, the sacerdotal functions must have occupied a far larger space in the affairs of every-day life, than for the Jew of the Dispersion who of necessity dispensed, and had no scruple at dispensing, with priestly ministrations from one year's end to the other. With this presumption drawn from probability the evidence of fact accords. In Latin Christendom, as represented by the Church of Carthage, the germs of the sacerdotal idea appear first and soonest ripen to maturity. If we could satisfy ourselves of the early date of the Ancient Syriac Documents lately published, we should have discovered another centre from which this idea was propagated. And so far their testimony may perhaps be accepted. Syria was at least a soil where such a plant would thrive and luxuriate. In no country of the civilized world was sacerdotal authority among the heathen greater. The most important centres of Syrian Christianity, Antioch and Emesa, were also the cradles of strongly-marked sacerdotal religions which at different times made their influence felt throughout the Roman empire[1].

[1] The worship of the Syrian goddess of Antioch was among the most popular of oriental superstitions under the earlier

This being so, it is a significant fact that the first instance of the term 'priest,' applied to a Christian minister, occurs in a heathen writer. At least I have not found any example of this application earlier than Lucian[1].

but sought support in Old Testament analogies.

But though the spirit, which imported the idea into the Church of Christ and sustained it there, was chiefly due to Gentile education, yet its form was almost as certainly derived from the Old Testament. And this is the modification which needs to be made in the statement, in itself substantially true, that sacerdotalism must be traced to the influence of Heathen rather than of Jewish converts.

(1) Metaphor of 'sacrifices.'

In the Apostolic writings we find the terms 'offering,' 'sacrifice,' applied to certain conditions and actions of the Christian life. These sacrifices or offerings are described as spiritual[2]; they consist of praise[3], of faith[4], of almsgiving[5], of the devotion of the body[6], of the conversion of unbelievers[7], and the like. Thus whatever is dedicated to God's service may be included under this metaphor. In one passage also the image is so far extended, that the Apostolic writer speaks of an *altar*[8] pertaining to the spiritual service of the Christian Church. If on this noble Scriptural language a false superstruc-

Cæsars; the rites of the Sun-god of Emesa became fashionable under Elagabalus.

[1] *de Mort. Peregr.* 11 *τὴν θαυμαστὴν σοφίαν τῶν Χριστιανῶν ἐξέμαθε περὶ τὴν Παλαιστίνην τοῖς ἱερεῦσι καὶ γραμματεῦσιν αὐτῶν ξυγγενόμενος.*

[2] 1 Pet. ii. 5.

[3] Heb. xiii. 15.

[4] Phil. ii. 17.

[5] Acts xxiv. 17, Phil. iv. 18; comp. Heb. xiii. 16.

[6] Rom. xii. 1.

[7] Rom. xv. 16.

[8] Heb. xiii. 10. See below, p. 130, note 1.

ture has been reared, we have here only one instance out of many, where the truth has been impaired by transferring statements from the region of metaphor to the region of fact.

These 'sacrifices' were very frequently the acts not of the individual Christian, but of the whole congregation. Such for instance were the offerings of public prayer and thanksgiving, or the collection of alms on the first day of the week, or the contribution of food for the agape, and the like. In such cases the congregation was represented by its minister, who thus acted as its mouthpiece and was said to 'present the offerings' to God. So the expression is used in the Epistle of St Clement of Rome[1]. But in itself it involves no sacerdotal view. This ancient father regards the sacrifice or offering as the act of the whole Church performed through its presbyters. The minister is a priest in the same sense only in which each individual member of the

Offerings presented by the ministers.

[1] Clem. Rom. 44 *τοὺς ἀμέμπτως καὶ ὁσίως προσενεγκόντας τὰ δῶρα.* What sort of offerings are meant, may be gathered from other passages in Clement's Epistle; e.g. § 35 *θυσία αἰνέσεως δοξάσει με*, § 52 *θῦσον τῷ Θεῷ θυσίαν αἰνέσεως καὶ ἀπόδος τῷ ὑψίστῳ τὰς εὐχάς σου*, § 36 *εὕρομεν τὸ σωτήριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν τὸν ἀρχιερέα τῶν προσφορῶν ἡμῶν τὸν προστάτην καὶ βοηθὸν τῆς ἀσθενείας ἡμῶν*, and § 41 *ἕκαστος ὑμῶν, ἀδελφοί, ἐν τῷ ἰδίῳ τάγματι εὐχαριστείτω τῷ Θεῷ ἐν ἀγαθῇ συνειδήσει ὑπάρχων, μὴ παρεκβαίνων τὸν ὡρισμένον τῆς λειτουργίας αὐτοῦ κανόνα.* Compare especially Heb. xiii. 10, 15, 16 *ἔχομεν θυσιαστήριον ἐξ οὗ φαγεῖν οὐκ ἔχουσιν [ἐξουσίαν] οἱ τῇ σκηνῇ λατρεύοντες...Δι' αὐτοῦ οὖν ἀναφέρωμεν θυσίαν αἰνέσεως διὰ παντὸς τῷ Θεῷ, τοντέστιν, καρπὸν χειλέων ὁμολογούντων τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ· τῆς δὲ εὐποιΐας καὶ κοινωνίας μὴ ἐπιλανθάνεσθε, τοιαύταις γὰρ θυσίαις εὐαρεστεῖται ὁ Θεός.*

The doctrine of the early Church respecting 'sacrifice' is investigated by Höfling *die Lehre der ältesten Kirche vom Opfer* (Erlangen 1851).

congregation is a priest. When St Clement denounces those who usurp the functions of the presbyters, he reprobates their conduct not as an act of sacrilege but as a violation of order. He views the presbytery as an Apostolic ordinance, not as a sacerdotal caste.

Thus when this father speaks of the presbytery as 'presenting the offerings,' he uses an expression which, if not directly scriptural, is at least accordant with the tenour of Scripture. But from such language the transition to sacerdotal views was easy, where the sacerdotal spirit was rife. From being the act of the whole congregation, the sacrifice came to be regarded as the act of the minister who officiated on its behalf.

Special reference of the metaphor to the eucharist.

And this transition was moreover facilitated by the growing tendency to apply the terms 'sacrifice' and 'offering' exclusively or chiefly to the eucharistic service. It may be doubted whether, even as used by St Clement, the expression may not have a special reference to this chief act of Christian dedication[1]. It is quite certain that writers belonging

[1] On the whole however the passage from the Epistle to the Hebrews alluded to in the last note seems to be the best exponent of St Clement's meaning, as he very frequently follows this Apostolic writer. If εὐχαριστείτω has any special reference to the holy eucharist, as it may have, δῶρα will nevertheless be the alms and prayers and thanksgivings which accompanied the celebration of it. Compare *Const. Apost.* ii. 25 αἱ τότε θυσίαι νῦν εὐχαὶ καὶ δεήσεις καὶ εὐχαριστίαι, αἱ τότε ἀπαρχαὶ καὶ δεκάται καὶ ἀφαιρέματα καὶ δῶρα νῦν προσφοραὶ αἱ διὰ τῶν ὁσίων ἐπισκόπων προσφερόμεναι Κυρίῳ κ.τ.λ., § 27 προσήκει οὖν καὶ ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί, τὰς θυσίας ὑμῶν ἤτοι προσφορὰς τῷ ἐπισκόπῳ προσφέρειν ὡς ἀρχιερεῖ κ.τ.λ., § 34 τοὺς καρποὺς ὑμῶν καὶ τὰ ἔργα τῶν χειρῶν ὑμῶν εἰς εὐλογίαν ὑμῶν

to the generations next following, Justin Martyr and Irenæus for instance[1], employ the terms very frequently with this reference. We may here reserve the question in what sense the celebration of the Lord's supper may or may not be truly called a sacrifice. The point to be noticed at present is this; that the offering of the eucharist, being regarded as the one special act of sacrifice and appearing externally to the eye as the act of the officiating minister, might well lead to the minister being called a priest and then being thought a priest in some exclusive sense, where the religious bias was in this direction and as soon as the true position of the minister as the representative of the congregation was lost sight of.

(2) Analogy of the three orders and the Levitical priesthood.

But besides the metaphor or the analogy of the sacrifice, there was another point of resemblance also between the Jewish priesthood and the Christian ministry, which favoured the sacerdotal view of the latter. As soon as the episcopate and presbytery ceased to be regarded as sub-orders and were looked upon as distinct orders, the correspondence of the threefold ministry with the three ranks of the Levitical priesthood could

προσφέροντες αὐτῷ (sc. τῷ ἐπισκόπῳ)...τὰ δῶρα ὑμῶν διδόντες αὐτῷ ὡς ἱερεῖ Θεοῦ, § 53 δῶρον δέ ἐστι Θεῷ ἡ ἑκάστου προσευχὴ καὶ εὐχαριστία: comp. also § 35. These passages are quoted in Höfling, p. 27 sq.

[1] The chief passages in these fathers relating to Christian oblations are, Justin *Apol.* i 13 (p. 60), i. 65, 66, 67 (p. 97 sq.), *Dial.* 28, 29 (p. 246), 41 (p. 259 sq.), 116, 117 (p. 344 sq.), Iren. *Haer.* iv. cc. 17, 18, 19, v. 2. 3, *Fragm.* 38 (Stieren). The place occupied by the eucharistic elements in their view of sacrifice will only be appreciated by reading the passages continuously.

not fail to suggest itself. The solitary bishop represented the solitary high-priest; the principal acts of Christian sacrifice were performed by the presbyters, as the principal acts of Jewish sacrifice by the priests; and the attendant ministrations were assigned in the one case to the deacon, as in the other to the Levite. Thus the analogy seemed complete. To this correspondence however there was one grave impediment. The only High-Priest under the Gospel recognised by the apostolic writings, is our Lord Himself. Accordingly in the Christian remains of the ages next succeeding this title is reserved as by right to Him[1]; and though belonging to various schools, all writers alike abstain from applying it to the bishop. Yet the scruple was at length set aside. When it had become usual to speak of the presbyters as 'sacerdotes,' the designation of 'pontifex' or 'summus sacerdos' for the bishop was far too convenient and too appropriate to be neglected.

Thus the analogy of the sacrifices and the correspondence of the threefold order supplied the material on which the sacerdotal feeling worked. And in this way, by the union of Gentile sentiment with the ordinances of the Old Dispensation, the doctrine of an exclusive priesthood found its way into the Church of Christ.

Question suggested.

How far is the language of the later Church justifiable? Can the Christian ministry be called a priesthood in any sense? and if so, in what sense?

[1] See Clem. Rom. 36, 58, Polyc. *Phil.* 12, Ignat. *Philad.* 9, *Test. xii. Patr.* Rub. 6, Sym. 7, etc., *Clem. Recogn.* i. 48.

The historical investigation, which has suggested this question as its proper corollary, has also supplied the means of answering it.

Silence of the Apostolic writers.

Though different interpretations may be put upon the fact that the sacred writers throughout refrain from applying sacerdotal terms to the Christian ministry, I think it must be taken to signify this much at least, that this ministry, if a priesthood at all, is a priesthood of a type essentially different from the Jewish. Otherwise we shall be perplexed to explain why the earliest Christian teachers should have abstained from using those terms which alone would adequately express to their hearers the one most important aspect of the ministerial office. It is often said in reply, that we have here a question not of words, but of things. This is undeniable: but words express things; and the silence of the Apostles still requires an explanation.

Epistle to the Hebrews; its doctrinal teaching,

However the interpretation of this fact is not far to seek. The Epistle to the Hebrews speaks at great length on priests and sacrifices in their Jewish and their Christian bearing. It is plain from this epistle, as it may be gathered also from other notices Jewish and Heathen, that the one prominent idea of the priestly office at this time was the function of *offering sacrifice* and thereby making atonement. Now this Apostolic writer teaches that all sacrifices had been consummated in the one Sacrifice, all priesthoods absorbed in the one Priest. The offering had been made once for all: and, as there were no more victims, there could be no more priests[1]. All

[1] The epistle deals mainly with the office of Christ as the antitype of the *High-Priest* offering the *annual* sacrifice of

former priesthoods had borne witness to the necessity of a human mediator, and this sentiment had its satisfaction in the Person and Office of the Son of Man. All past sacrifices had proclaimed the need of an atoning death, and had their antitype, their realization, their annulment, in the Cross of Christ. This explicit statement supplements and interprets the silence elsewhere noticed in the Apostolic writings.

and spiritual analogies.

Strictly accordant too with the general tenour of his argument is the language used throughout by the writer of this epistle. He speaks of Christian sacrifices, of a Christian altar; but the sacrifices are praise and thanksgiving and well-doing, the altar is apparently the Cross of Christ[1]. If the Christian

atonement: and it has been urged that there is still room for a sacrificial priesthood under the High-Priest. The whole argument however is equally applicable to the inferior priests: and in one passage at least it is directly so applied (x. 11, 12), 'And every priest standeth daily (*καθ' ἡμέραν*) ministering and offering the same sacrifices, etc.'; where the v. l. *ἀρχιερεὺς* for *ἱερεὺς* seems to have arisen from the desire to bring the verse into more exact conformity with what has gone before. This passage, it should be remembered, is the summing-up and generalization of the previous argument.

[1] It is surprising that some should have interpreted *θυσιαστήριον* in Heb. xiii. 10 of the Lord's table. There may be a doubt as to the exact significance of the term in this passage, but an actual altar is plainly not intended. This is shown by the context both before and after: e.g. ver. 9 the opposition of *χάρις* and *βρώματα*, ver. 15 the contrast implied in the mention of *θυσία αἰνέσεως* and *καρπὸς χειλέων*, and ver. 16 the naming *εὐποιΐα καὶ κοινωνία* as the kind of sacrifice with which God is well pleased. In my former editions I interpreted the *θυσιαστήριον* of the congregation assembled for worship, having been led to this interpretation by the Christian phraseology of succeeding ages. So Clem. Alex. *Strom.* vii. 6, p. 848, *ἔστι γοῦν τὸ παρ' ἡμῖν θυσιαστήριον ἐνταῦθα τὸ ἐπίγειον τὸ ἄθροισμα τῶν ταῖς εὐχαῖς ἀνακειμένων*. The use of the word

in Ignatius also, though less obvious, appears to be substantially the same, *Ephes.* 5, *Trall.* 7, *Philad.* 4 (but in *Magn.* 7 it seems to be a metaphor for our Lord Himself); see Höfling *Opfer* etc. p. 32 sq. Similarly too Polycarp (§ 4) speaks of the body of widows as *θυσιαστήριον Θεοῦ*. [See notes on these passages in *Apostolic Fathers*, Part II. *S. Ignatius, S. Polycarp.*] But I have since been convinced that the context points to the Cross of Christ spiritually regarded, as the true interpretation.

Since my first edition appeared, a wholly different interpretation of the passage has been advocated by more than one writer. It is maintained that *ἔχομεν θυσιαστήριον* should be understood '*we Jews* have an altar,' and that the writer of the epistle is here bringing an example from the Old Dispensation itself (the sin-offering on the day of atonement) in which the sacrifices were not eaten. This interpretation is attractive, but it seems to me inadequate to explain the *whole* context (though it suits parts well enough), and is ill adapted to individual expressions (e.g. *θυσιαστήριον* where *θυσία* would be expected, and *οἱ τῇ σκηνῇ λατρεύοντες* which thus becomes needlessly emphatic), not to mention that the first person plural and the present tense *ἔχομεν* seem unnatural where the author and his readers are spoken of, not as actual Christians, but as former Jews. In fact the analogy of the sacrifice on the day of atonement appears not to be introduced till the next verse, *ὧν γὰρ εἰσφέρεται ζώων κ.τ.λ.*

Some interpreters again, from a comparison of 1 Cor. ix. 13 with 1 Cor. x. 18, have inferred that St Paul recognises the designation of the Lord's table as an altar. On the contrary it is a speaking fact, that in both passages he avoids using this term of the Lord's table, though the language of the context might readily have suggested it to him, if he had considered it appropriate. Nor does the argument in either case require or encourage such an inference. In 1 Cor. ix. 13, 14, the Apostle writes 'Know ye not that they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.' The point of resemblance in the two cases is the holding a sacred office; but the ministering on the altar is predicated only of the former. So also in 1 Cor. x. 18 sq., the *altar* is named as common to Jews and Heathens, but the *table* only as common to Christians and Heathens; i.e. the holy eucharist is a banquet, but

ministry were a sacerdotal office, if the holy eucharist were a sacerdotal act, in the same sense in which the Jewish priesthood and the Jewish sacrifice were sacerdotal, then his argument is faulty and his language misleading. Though dwelling at great length on the Christian counterparts to the Jewish priest, the Jewish altar, the Jewish sacrifice, he omits to mention the one office, the one place, the one act, which on this showing would be their truest and liveliest counterparts in the every-day worship of the Church of Christ. He has rejected these, and he has chosen instead moral and spiritual analogies for all these sacred types[1]. Thus in what he has said and in what he has left unsaid alike, his language points to one and the same result.

Christian ministers are priests in another sense;

If therefore the sacerdotal office be understood to imply the offering of sacrifices, then the Epistle to the Hebrews leaves no place for a Christian priesthood. If on the other hand the word be taken in a wider and looser acceptation, it cannot well be withheld from the ministry of the Church of Christ. Only in this case the meaning of the term should be clearly apprehended: and it might have been better if the later Christian vocabulary had conformed to the silence of the Apostolic writers, so that the possibility of confusion would have been avoided.

According to this broader meaning, the priest may be defined as one who represents God to man and man to God. It is moreover indispensable that he should be called by God, for no man 'taketh this

it is not a sacrifice (in the Jewish or Heathen sense of sacrifice).

[1] For the passages see above, pp. 124, 125.

honour to himself.' The Christian ministry satisfies both these conditions.

as having a divine appointment,

Of the fulfilment of the latter the only evidence within our cognisance is the fact that the minister is called according to a divinely appointed order. If the preceding investigation be substantially correct, the three-fold ministry can be traced to Apostolic direction; and short of an express statement we can possess no better assurance of a divine appointment or at least a divine sanction. If the facts do not allow us to unchurch other Christian communities differently organized, they may at least justify our jealous adhesion to a polity derived from this source.

And while the mode of appointment satisfies the one condition, the nature of the office itself satisfies the other; for it exhibits the doubly representative character which is there laid down.

as representing God to man,

The Christian minister is God's ambassador to men: he is charged with the ministry of reconciliation; he unfolds the will of heaven; he declares in God's name the terms on which pardon is offered; and he pronounces in God's name the absolution of the penitent. This last mentioned function has been thought to invest the ministry with a distinctly sacerdotal character. Yet it is very closely connected with the magisterial and pastoral duties of the office, and is only priestly in the same sense in which they are priestly. As empowered to declare the conditions of God's grace, he is empowered also to proclaim the consequences of their acceptance. But throughout his office is representative and not vicarial[1]. He does not interpose between

[1] The distinction is made in Maurice's *Kingdom of Christ* II. p. 216.

God and man in such a way that direct communion with God is superseded on the one hand, or that his own mediation becomes indispensable on the other.

and as representing man to God.

Again, the Christian minister is the representative of man to God—of the congregation primarily, of the individual indirectly as a member of the congregation. The alms, the prayers, the thanksgivings of the community are offered through him. Some representation is as necessary in the Church as it is in a popular government: and the nature of the representation is not affected by the fact that the form of the ministry has been handed down from Apostolic times and may well be presumed to have a divine sanction. For here again it must be borne in mind that the minister's function is *representative* without being *vicarial*. He is a priest, as the mouthpiece, the delegate, of a priestly race. His acts are not his own, but the acts of the congregation. Hence too it will follow that, viewed on this side as on the other, his function cannot be absolute and indispensable. It may be a general rule, it may be under ordinary circumstances a practically universal law, that the highest acts of congregational worship shall be performed through the principal officers of the congregation. But an emergency may arise when the spirit and not the letter must decide. The Christian ideal will then interpose and interpret our duty. The higher ordinance of the universal priesthood will overrule all special limitations. The layman will assume functions which are otherwise restricted to the ordained minister[1].

[1] For the opinion of the early Church on this subject see especially the passage of Tertullian quoted above, pp. 115, 116.

Yet it would be vain to deny that a very different conception prevailed for many centuries in the Church of Christ. The Apostolic ideal was set forth, and within a few generations forgotten. The vision was only for a time and then vanished. A strictly sacerdotal view of the ministry superseded the broader and more spiritual conception of their priestly functions. From being the representatives, the ambassadors, of God, they came to be regarded as His vicars. Nor is this the only instance where a false conception has seemed to maintain a long-lived domination over the Church. For some centuries the idea of the Holy Roman Empire enthralled the minds of men. For a still longer period the idea of the Holy Roman See held undisturbed sway over Western Christendom. To those who take a comprehensive view of the progress of Christianity, even these more lasting obscurations of the truth will present no serious difficulty. They will not suffer themselves to be blinded thereby to the true nobility of Ecclesiastical History: they will not fail to see that, even in the seasons of her deepest degradation, the Church was still the regenerator of society, the upholder of right principle against selfish interest, the visible witness of the Invisible God; they will thankfully confess that, notwithstanding the pride and selfishness and dishonour of individual rulers, notwithstanding the imperfections and errors of special institutions and developments, yet in her continuous history the Divine promise has been signally realized, 'Lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.'

The prevalence of sacerdotalism considered.

A.

Additional Notes to the Dissertation upon the Christian Ministry.

The following extracts from Bishop Lightfoot's works illustrate his view of the Christian Ministry over and above the particular scope of the Essay in his Commentary on the Philippians. He felt that unfair use had been made of that special line of thought which he there pursued, and soon after the close of the Lambeth Conference of 1888 *he had this collection of passages printed.*

It is felt by those who have the best means of knowing that he would himself have wished the collection to stand together simply as his reply to the constant imputation to him of opinions for which writers wished to claim his support without any justification.

1. Commentary on the Epistle to the Philippians (Essay on the Christian Ministry, 1868).

(i) p. 199, ed. 1; p. 201, later edd. (See above, p. 31.)

'Unless we have recourse to a sweeping condemnation of received documents, it seems vain to deny that early in the second century the episcopal office was firmly and widely established. Thus during the last

three decades of the first century, and consequently during the lifetime of the latest surviving Apostle, this change must have been brought about.'

(ii) p. 212, ed. 1; p. 214, later edd. (See above, p. 51.)

'The evidence for the early and wide extension of episcopacy throughout proconsular Asia, the scene of St John's latest labours, may be considered irrefragable.'

(iii) p. 225, ed. 1; p. 227, later edd. (See above, pp. 72, 73.)

'But these notices, besides establishing the general prevalence of episcopacy, also throw considerable light on its origin... Above all, they establish this result clearly, that its maturer forms are seen first in those regions where the latest surviving Apostles (more especially St John) fixed their abode, and at a time when its prevalence cannot be dissociated from their influence or their sanction.'

(iv) p. 232, ed. 1; p. 234, later edd. (See above, p. 82.)

'It has been seen that the institution of an episcopate must be placed as far back as the closing years of the first century, and that it cannot, without violence to historical testimony, be dissevered from the name of St John.'

(v) p. 265, ed. 1; p. 267, later edd. (See above, p. 133.)

'If the preceding investigation be substantially correct, the three-fold ministry can be traced to Apostolic direction; and short of an express statement we can possess no better assurance of a divine appointment or at least a divine sanction. If the facts do not allow us to unchurch other Christian communities differently organized, they may at least justify our jealous adhesion to a polity derived from this source.'

2. Commentary on the Epistle to the Philippians (Preface to the Sixth Edition), 1881.

'The present edition is an exact reprint of the preceding one. This statement applies as well to the Essay on the Threefold Ministry as to the rest of the work. I should not have thought it necessary to be thus explicit, had I not been informed of a rumour that I had found reason to abandon the main opinions expressed in that Essay. There is no foundation for any such report. The only point of importance on which I have modified my views, since the Essay was first written, is the authentic form of the letters of St Ignatius. Whereas in the earlier editions of this work I had accepted the three Curetonian letters, I have since been convinced (as stated in later editions) that the seven letters of the Short Greek are genuine. This divergence however does not materially affect the main point at issue, since even the Curetonian letters afford abundant evidence of the spread of episcopacy in the earliest years of the second century.

But on the other hand, while disclaiming any change in my opinions, I desire equally to disclaim the representations of those opinions which have been put forward in some quarters. The object of the Essay was an investigation into the origin of the Christian Ministry. The result has been a confirmation of the statement in the English Ordinal, "It is evident unto all men diligently reading the Holy Scripture and ancient authors that from the Apostles' time there have been these orders of Ministers in Christ's Church, Bishops, Priests, and Deacons." But I was scrupulously anxious not to overstate the evidence in any case; and it would seem that partial and qualifying statements, prompted by this anxiety, have assumed undue proportions in the minds

of some readers, who have emphasized them to the neglect of the general drift of the Essay.'

3. Sermon preached before the Representative Council of the Scottish Episcopal Church in St Mary's Church at Glasgow, October 10, 1882. ('Sermons preached on Special Occasions,' p. 182 sq.)

'When I spoke of unity as St Paul's charge to the Church of Corinth, the thoughts of all present must, I imagine, have fastened on one application of the Apostolic rule which closely concerns yourselves. Episcopal communities in Scotland outside the organization of the Scottish Episcopal Church—this is a spectacle which no one, I imagine, would view with satisfaction in itself, and which only a very urgent necessity could justify. Can such a necessity be pleaded? "One body" as well as "one Spirit," this is the Apostolic rule. No natural interpretation can be put on these words which does not recognize the obligation of external, corporate union. Circumstances may prevent the realisation of the Apostle's conception, but the ideal must be ever present to our aspirations and our prayers. I have reason to believe that this matter lies very near to the hearts of all Scottish Episcopalians. May God grant you a speedy accomplishment of your desire. You have the same doctrinal formularies: you acknowledge the same episcopal polity: you respect the same liturgical forms. "Sirs, ye are brethren." Do not strain the conditions of reunion too tightly. I cannot say, for I do not know, what faults or what misunderstandings there may have been on either side in the past. If there have been any faults, forget them. If there exist any misunderstandings, clear them up. "Let the dead past bury its dead."

* * * * * * *

While you seek unity among yourselves, you will pray likewise that unity may be restored to your Presbyterian brothers. Not insensible to the special blessings which you yourselves enjoy, clinging tenaciously to the threefold ministry as the completeness of the Apostolic ordinance and the historical backbone of the Church, valuing highly all those sanctities of liturgical office and ecclesiastical season, which, modified from age to age, you have inherited from an almost immemorial past, thanking God, but not thanking Him in any Pharisaic spirit, that these so many and great privileges are continued to you which others have lost, you will nevertheless shrink, as from the venom of a serpent's fang, from any mean desire that their divisions may be perpetuated in the hope of profiting by their troubles. *Divide et impera* may be a shrewd worldly motto; but coming in contact with spiritual things, it defiles them like pitch. *Pacifica et impera* is the true watchword of the Christian and the Churchman.'

4. The Apostolic Fathers, Part II. S. Ignatius: S. Polycarp, Vol. I. pp. 376, 377, 1885 (pp. 390, 391, 1889).

'The whole subject has been investigated by me in an Essay on "The Christian Ministry"; and to this I venture to refer my readers for fuller information. It is there shown, if I mistake not, that though the New Testament itself contains as yet no direct and indisputable notices of a localized episcopate in the Gentile Churches, as distinguished from the moveable episcopate exercised by Timothy in Ephesus and by Titus in Crete, yet there is satisfactory evidence of its development in the later years of the Apostolic age; that this development was not simultaneous and equal in all parts of Christendom; that it is more especially connected with

the name of St John; and that in the early years of the second century the episcopate was widely spread and had taken firm root, more especially in Asia Minor and in Syria. If the evidence on which its extension in the regions east of the Ægean at this epoch be resisted, I am at a loss to understand what single fact relating to the history of the Christian Church during the first half of the second century can be regarded as established; for the testimony in favour of this spread of the episcopate is more abundant and more varied than for any other institution or event during this period, so far as I recollect.'

5. Sermon preached before the Church Congress at Wolverhampton, October 3, 1887. ('Sermons preached on Special Occasions,' p. 259 sq.)

'But if this charge fails, what shall we say of her isolation? Is not this isolation, so far as it is true, much more her misfortune than her fault? Is she to be blamed because she retained a form of Church government which had been handed down in unbroken continuity from the Apostolic times, and thus a line was drawn between her and the reformed Churches of other countries? Is it a reproach to her that she asserted her liberty to cast off the accretions which had gathered about the Apostolic doctrine and practice through long ages, and for this act was repudiated by the Roman Church? But this very position,—call it isolation if you will—which was her reproach in the past, is her hope for the future. She was isolated because she could not consort with either extreme. She was isolated because she stood midway between the two. This central position is her vantage ground, which fits her to be a mediator wheresoever an occasion of mediation may arise.

But this charge of isolation, if it had any appearance of truth seventy years ago, has lost its force now.'

6. Durham Diocesan Conference. Inaugural Address, October, 1887.

'When I speak of her religious position I refer alike to polity and to doctrine. In both respects the negative, as well as the positive, bearing of her position has to be considered. She has retained the form of Church government inherited from the Apostolic times, while she has shaken off a yoke, which even in medieval times our fathers found too heavy to bear, and which subsequent developments have rendered tenfold more oppressive. She has remained stedfast in the faith of Nicaea, but she has never compromised herself by any declaration which may entangle her in the meshes of science. The doctrinal inheritance of the past is hers, and the scientific hopes of the future are hers. She is intermediate and she may become mediatorial, when the opportunity occurs. It was this twofold inheritance of doctrine and polity which I had in view, when I spoke of the essentials which could under no circumstances be abandoned. Beyond this, it seems to me that large concessions might be made. Unity is not uniformity.....On the other hand it would be very short-sighted policy—even if it were not traitorous to the truth—to tamper with essentials and thus to imperil our mediatorial vantage ground, for the sake of snatching an immediate increase of numbers.'

7. Address on the Reopening of the Chapel, Auckland Castle, August 1st, 1888. ('Leaders in the Northern Church,' p. 145.)

'But, while we "lengthen our cords," we must

"strengthen our stakes" likewise. Indeed this strengthening of our stakes will alone enable us to lengthen our cords with safety, when the storms are howling around us. We cannot afford to sacrifice any portion of the faith once delivered to the saints; we cannot surrender for any immediate advantages the threefold ministry which we have inherited from Apostolic times, and which is the historic backbone of the Church. But neither can we on the other hand return to the fables of medievalism or submit to a yoke which our fathers found too grievous to be borne—a yoke now rendered a hundredfold more oppressive to the mind and conscience, weighted as it is by recent and unwarranted impositions of doctrine.'

B.

Extract from Preface to the Didache

(*Apostolic Fathers*, pp. 215, 216).

The work is obviously of very early date, as is shown by the internal evidence of language and subject-matter. Thus for instance the itinerant prophetic order has not yet been displaced by the permanent localized ministry, but exists side by side with it as in the lifetime of S. Paul (Eph. iv. 11, 1 Cor. xii. 28). Secondly, episcopacy has apparently not yet become universal; the word 'bishop' is still used as synonymous with 'presbyter,' and the writer therefore couples 'bishops' with 'deacons' (§ 15) as S. Paul does (1 Tim. iii. 1—8, Phil. i. 1) under similar circumstances. Thirdly, from the expression in § 10 'after ye have been filled' it appears that the agape still remains part of the Lord's Supper. Lastly, the archaic simplicity of its practical suggestions is only consistent with the early infancy of a church. These indications point to the first or the beginning of the second century as the date of the work in its present form.

C.

The Ignatian Question.

In the following passage in his later work, The Apostolic Fathers, Part II. S. Ignatius, S. Polycarp, I. p. 407 sq. (*1st edit.* 1885), I. p. 422 sq. (*2nd edit.* 1889), *Dr Lightfoot sums up his reasons for the change of opinion upon the Ignatian question announced above, p.* 83, *note* 1.

The facts then are these:

(1) No Christian writings of the second century, and very few writings of antiquity, whether Christian or pagan, are so well authenticated as the Epistles of Ignatius. If the Epistle of Polycarp be accepted as genuine, the authentication is perfect[1].

(2) The main ground of objection against the genuineness of the Epistle of Polycarp is its authentication of the Ignatian Epistles. Otherwise there is every reason to believe that it would have passed unquestioned.

(3) The Epistle of Polycarp itself is exceptionally well authenticated by the testimony of his disciple Irenæus.

[1] '...Ignatius, if the Epistle of Polycarp be accepted as genuine.' (2nd edit.)

(4) All attempts to explain the phenomena of the Epistle of Polycarp, as forged or interpolated to give colour to the Ignatian Epistles, have signally failed.

(5) The external testimony to the Ignatian Epistles being so strong, only the most decisive marks of spuriousness in the epistles themselves, as for instance proved anachronisms, would justify us in suspecting them as interpolated or rejecting them as spurious.

(6) But so far is this from being the case that one after another the anachronisms urged against these letters have vanished in the light of further knowledge. Thus the alleged refutation of the Valentinian doctrine of æons in *Magn.* 8 depends on a false reading which recently discovered materials for the text have corrected. The supposed anachronism of 'the leopards' (*Rom.* 5) has been refuted by the production of passages overlooked by the objector. The argument from the mention of the 'Catholic Church' (*Smyrn.* 8) has been shown to rest on a false interpretation which disregards the context.

(7) As regards the argument which Daillé calls 'palmary'—the prevalence of episcopacy as a recognized institution—we may say boldly that all the facts point the other way. If the writer of these letters had represented the Churches of Asia Minor as under presbyteral government, he would have contradicted all the evidence, which without one dissentient voice points to episcopacy as the established form of Church government in these districts from the close of the first century.

(8) The circumstances of the condemnation, captivity, and journey of Ignatius, which have been a stumbling-block to some modern critics, did not present any difficulty to those who lived near the time and therefore knew best what might be expected under the circumstances; and they are sufficiently borne out by

examples, more or less analogous, to establish their credibility.

(9) The objections to the style and language of the epistles are beside the purpose. In some cases they arise from a misunderstanding of the writer's meaning. Generally they may be said to rest on the assumption that an apostolic father could not use exaggerated expressions, overstrained images, and the like—certainly a sandy foundation on which to build an argument.

(10) A like answer holds with regard to any extravagances in sentiment or opinion or character. Why should Ignatius not have exceeded the bounds of sober reason or correct taste? Other men in his own and immediately succeeding ages did both. As an apostolic father he was not exempt from the failings, if failings they were, of his age and position.

(11) While the investigation of the contents of these epistles has yielded this negative result, in dissipating the objections, it has at the same time had a high positive value, as revealing indications of a very early date, and therefore presumably of genuineness, in the surrounding circumstances, more especially in the types of false doctrine which it combats, in the ecclesiastical status which it presents, and in the manner in which it deals with the evangelical and apostolic documents.

(12) Moreover we discover in the personal environments of the assumed writer, and more especially in the notices of his route, many subtle coincidences which we are constrained to regard as undesigned, and which seem altogether beyond the reach of a forger.

(13) So likewise the peculiarities in style and diction of the epistles, as also in the representation of the writer's character, are much more capable of explanation in a genuine writing than in a forgery.

(14) While external and internal evidence thus combine to assert the genuineness of these writings, no satisfactory account has been or apparently can be given of them as a forgery of a later date than Ignatius. They would be quite purposeless as such; for they entirely omit all topics which would especially interest any subsequent age.

On these grounds we are constrained to accept the Seven Epistles of the Middle Form as the genuine work of Ignatius.

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